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THE CITY AND THE CASTLE



There she read of love and beauty and fame.

THE CITY AND THE CASTLE

BY ANNIE LUCAS

*A Story of the Reformation in
Switzerland*

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and New York

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THE CITY AND THE CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PILGRIMS OF OUR LADY.

"Vain folly of another age,
This wandering over earth;
To find the peace by some dark sin
Banished our household hearth.

"O pilgrim ! vain each tollsome step,
Vain every weary day !
There is no charm in soil or shrine
To wash the guilt away."



It was a lovely day in the year of grace 1517. The glorious sun, riding majestically through the deep blue of a cloudless sky, was looking down from his sapphire throne upon the smiling earth. Alas ! that such a sun should look down from such a sky upon a people that walked in darkness, and that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death !

It was a fair scene upon which he looked that morning among the grand Swiss mountains—those "everlasting hills" whose snow-clad peaks had received his first and last greeting, unchanged like himself for ages past, while nations had perished, races been swept away, and all save themselves altered or renewed.

But the spot of which we speak was not amidst the solemn grandeur of the mightiest Alps, where the glittering avalanche hangs poised on the rocky side of the towering steep—where the rugged glaciers stretch their frozen waves—where rushing rivers spring forth, new-born, yet in torrent force, from the blue depths of the vast ice-caves—where the dark shade of the pine-forest is unbroken by pathway or clearing, and the deep hush of the air disturbed only by the vulture's shrill cry, the dash of foaming waters in their precipitous leap from their rocky bed into the depths below, the thundering crash of the falling avalanche, and, it may be, the hollow blast of some lonely hunter's horn echoing from crag to crag. No ; it was a mountain-path among the hills whose vine-clad bases surrounded the proud city of Zurich.

The road wound up the steep mountain-side in many a curve and bend ; here hanging, as it were, on the very brink of a precipice, there winding through thick overhanging woods ; here rising bare and bleak in the midst of short mountain herbage, there sinking deep between huge sheltering rocks. Above, as we have said, stretched a blue and cloudless sky ; but the fierce rays of the sun were tempered by the refreshing currents of clear, pure, mountain air, that seemed to have gathered a delicious coolness in their passage round the snow-covered summits of the distant hills, which rose like strange-shaped, creamy-hued clouds against the azure heavens. Below lay stretched the bright, pleasant city of Zurich, with its wide busy quays, and bridges, and piers, its square cathedral towers and numerous spires, its white houses and dark-red pointed roofs ; the blue waters of the beautiful lake flashing and gleaming in the glad sunshine, as its smooth surface was rippled by the fresh, light breeze, or cleft by the oars of the numerous boats that skimmed lightly across it ; and the broad tract of undulating meadow-land, in which thousands of cattle were peacefully grazing, broken here and there by rich woods that swept down to the very margin of the shining lake. Beyond the city, the

Limmat rolled its heavy freight of barges slowly and steadily onward ; and on another side a smaller stream whirled, and foamed, and sparkled over its rocky bed, as it made its way from its mountain birthplace into the city. Around, in rich, profuse luxuriance, clustered the rainbow-hued Alpine flowers, gemming the short, vivid-green turf with colours brilliant and rich as those of Eastern jewels, and spreading their sweet perfumes on the balmy air. Even the hoary rocks that rose beside the path, or hung frowning over it, were festooned, not alone by the faithful clinging ivy, but draped with long graceful ferns waving in the light breeze, dappled with many-tinted mosses, and decked in cleft and cranny with blossoms as bright and lovely as those which nestled in the soft waving grass, or in the verdant shade of the ash, and beech, and sycamore trees, whose delicate foliage mingled with the more sombre hues of the pine, and larch, and juniper.

And not alone on mountain, and lake, and city, on stream, and tree, and flower, did the sun look down upon near that fair mountain-road that day ; for along it poured, in one continuous stream, a motley human crowd, all pressing forward in one direction, therefore apparently with one object in view. On they passed, young and old, rich and poor,—some on asses or mules, some on horses, but most on foot. The plain but handsome dress of the well-to-do burgher contrasted with the picturesque but tawdry finery of the peasant costume ; the rich bright silks and velvets of the noble were seen side by side with the tattered rags of the squalid mendicant. Monks of all grades and orders, nuns from all communities, were abundantly represented : the black-robed Augustine walked by the Cistercian clad in dingy white ; the Dominican, in his black tunic and white robe, by the barefooted Franciscan, with his rough brown frock and girdle of knotted cord ; the dark-faced, hollow-eyed Carthusian by the sleek, pompous-looking Benedictine. Nuns went on their upward way, with eyes bent on the ground, and fingers rapidly passing over their beads—sometimes singly,

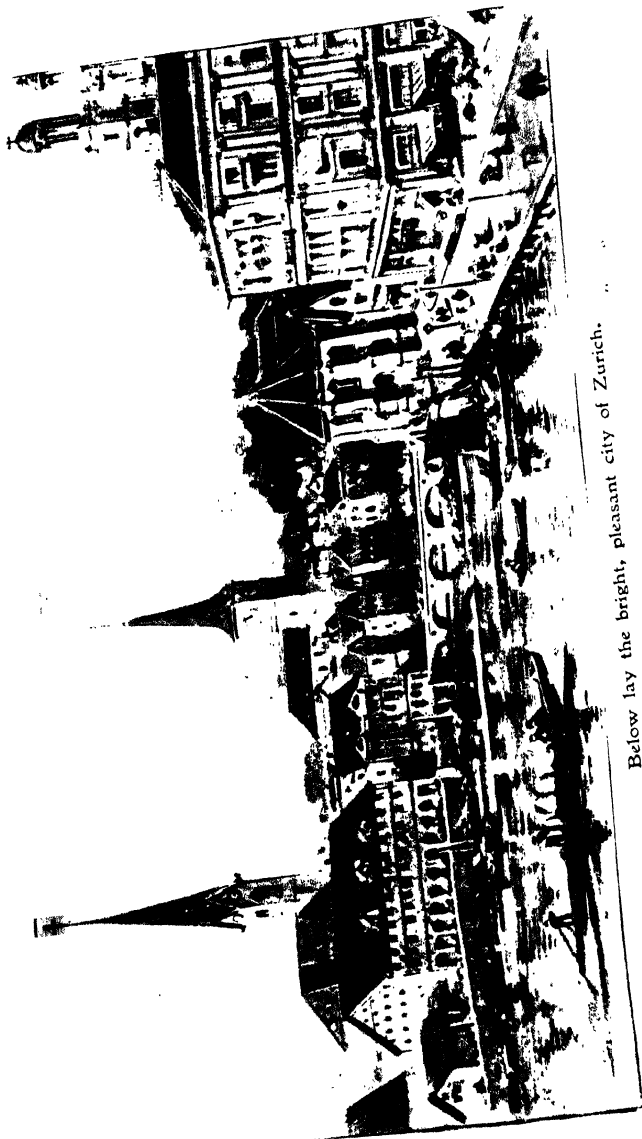
sometimes in groups. The swarthy Spaniard and the fair-faced Saxon, the fiery-eyed Italian and the grave, quiet Englishman—men from all parts of Europe—might have been found there. But, naturally, the prevailing elements were German and Swiss. The gleam of arms was not wholly wanting; more than one mail-clad warrior mingled with the throng from time to time, and scattered bright rays around, as the sun glanced on his glittering arms of proof.

And other sounds besides the trampling of many feet, and the hum of many voices, were heard,—sweet strains rose and fell, as bands of singers advanced, chanting, as they went, the praises of the Virgin, and other hymns; and ever and anon the silvery music of childhood's happy laughter pealed forth, as a merry little one played some prank with its friends or companions.

But strangely diverse and varied as were the garb, and age, and rank, and office, and nationality of those who trod that one path with the one object, no less diverse and varied were the faces in that motley throng, or rather the expression of the faces. This must ever be where many men meet together. Like blades of grass in the same field, nourished by the same soil, swayed by the same wind, apparently each like other, but balking every effort to find any two exactly alike. And here it seemed specially so. There were some faces bright and glad as the scene around, unclouded and smiling as the sunny sky, no thought or care dimming the holiday gladness of eye and brow; others weary, and wistful, and anxious, and troubled; some grave and thoughtful, others stolid and unmoved; some—and these not of monk or nun alone—shining with fervid devotion, or shaded with solemn awe; others full of levity, or sarcasm, or scarce concealed contempt.

But all pressed on alike, save that the young, and the strong, and the earnest left the aged, and the weak, and the triflers behind, and gained the goal first.

And that goal—that one object of the hundreds that trod



Below lay the bright, pleasant city of Zurich.

that one road—what was it? Ever and anon, as the foremost ranks came in sight of a stately building that rose above the trees far up the steep hill-side, they fell on their knees—some, indeed, prostrate on the earth; those whose rosaries had hitherto hung useless, eagerly drew them forth; and Ave Marias and Pater Nosters pattered on the air like thunder rain-drops on forest leaves. All the giddiest and gayest even sought to say the prescribed number of prayers with due reverence, real or assumed. For that proud edifice was no other than the world-famed Abbey of Einsiedeln, favoured with the special patronage and protection of the Virgin, the shrine of the sainted Meinrad, and of the wondrous image of the Holy Mother, by which, through long ages, miracles of grace and healing had been wrought, and to which, for centuries past, thousands of pilgrims, of all ranks and ages, had resorted, as on the day on which our story commences.

Yes; that was the goal—the one object of those who trod the one road. To carry earth's sins, and sorrows, and needs—to lay down life's burdens, and cares, and temptations—to pour out the soul's cravings, and hopes, and fears—before a painted image, representing one highly favoured, indeed, and blessed among women, but whose soul needed the same cleansing, whose spirit rejoiced in the same God and Saviour, that were provided by divine love for those poor, troubled, sinful men and women who were that day, and every day, thronging to her temple.

That day specially; for the next would usher in the great Festival of the Consecration of the Angels, and special graces and favours were attached to the prayers of those who should piously commemorate that marvellous event.

A great tree grows from a small seed. When the holy Meinrad buried himself in the deep seclusion of the dark pine-forest, he could have little foreseen that it would, in after ages, convert that austere and gloomy solitude into one of earth's famous places.

There were few among those pilgrims who could not have told, with more or less exactness, the story of St. Meinrad. Ah! but they knew little of another life-story—of One who left, not rude baronial castle, or calm and peaceful brotherhood, for lonely forest-hut, on wild, bleak mountain-side; but heaven itself—the glorious place whose wonders and delights “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive”—his Father’s bosom, and the adoring service of angels, for a manger-cradle, a houseless, homeless sojourn in a hostile land, among those who “knew Him not,” and a malefactor’s bitter death. Loud and high rung the praises of St. Meinrad, who, by his holy devotedness to the ever-blessed Mary, had won the boon of her special presence and protection in this her favoured temple: but no one spoke of Him whose mighty love had broken every barrier down between guilty, ruined man, and Him whose presence fills heaven and earth; for, alas! they knew Him not.

St. Meinrad was the son of Berthold, Count of Hohenzollern. Evincing an early taste for study, he was sent to the school established by the Benedictine monks in the Isle of Reichenau, in the Lake of Constance. This was in the earlier days of the Benedictine communities, before corruption and luxury had crept into them, and while the pristine simplicity and purity of their rule were observed. In those days they were indeed the helpers and benefactors of all those in whose neighbourhood they exercised their beneficent sway. Over the fierce robber-noble, and the wild, half-barbarous peasant, they alike gained an influence that was almost always exercised on the side of justice and mercy; and their convents were like an oasis in the surrounding desert of ignorance, and rapacity, and crime. All kinds of trades were practised and taught by them, and what little light and learning was shed upon those truly dark ages certainly emanated from them. To those very monks of Reichenau, Switzerland owes the smiling vineyards that clothe so many of the lower slopes of her mountains. The first vines

were planted there by them, and they laboured hard, by precept and example, to teach the rude boors around the science and profit of agriculture.

At the age of twenty-five, Meinrad took the final vows. This last step was induced by reading Cassian's "Fathers of the Desert." Appointed master of the newly-founded school of Bollingen, on the wild shores of the Lake of Zurich, he soon gained the affections of the monks and scholars by his talents, piety, and gentleness, and a sphere of usefulness and honour opened out before him. But the records of the lives of the old hermits of Syria and Egypt had taken deep hold upon his mind, and awakened yearnings that the busy life he was called upon to lead increased rather than deadened. He longed to emulate the examples that seemed to his darkened understanding so worthy of imitation, so true a pattern of a life devoted to God. The cloister's gloom and stillness were no longer solitude enough; for man was there, and he would be alone with God. Often he looked with longing eyes across the blue lake, and over the darkly-mounting pine-forests, to the distant purple peak of Mount Etzel. And thither at last he went, under pretence of a fishing excursion. At Altendorff he rested at the hut of a pious widow, who undertook to supply his bare necessities and keep his secret; little dreaming, doubtless, that her lowly task of ministering to the needs of one who sought—blindly, indeed, and ignorantly—to devote himself to God, was one more in accordance with God's Word and will than the lonely, useless life of self-immolation and banishment to which Meinrad devoted himself. He built himself a log-hut, after obtaining the abbot's permission to leave the monastery, and settled in the deepest gloom of the pine-forest. Here he remained seven years, fasting and praying, treading in the steps of St. Anthony, St. Macarius, St. Paul of Egypt, and the other great anchorites, whose example had so fired his zeal.

But at last even this solitude became such no longer. His old pupils resorted to him; his retreat became increasingly

thronged with pilgrims, and he resolved to penetrate still further into the gloomy recesses of the mountain forest. He discovered a spot at the foot of the dark wood-clad Mythen mountain, at the head of the wild Alb valley, where a spring issued from the rock on a gentle rise. Here he built a fresh cell and chapel, in the latter of which was placed the image of the Virgin, the gift of Hildegard, Abbess of Zurich, and daughter of Louis the German, which was afterwards to receive such superstitious adoration, and be accredited with so many miracles, even to this day. There he spent the remaining twenty-five years of his life; not altogether in the solitude he sought and craved, for, after several years of quiet, his retreat was discovered by a carpenter, and pilgrims soon thronged to him to implore his prayer and blessing. But awful must have been the gloom that surrounded him in the solemn midnight hours, when the wind swept through the dark forest shades, waking low mysterious whispers in their gloomy aisles, scarce opening a passage for the pale moonbeams, which yet gleamed here and there with weird brightness, when the pure, calm stars looked searchingly down upon the lonely man,—alone with God and with his own heart! What must it have been, then, when the thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed, and the fierce storm-wind swept through the creaking branches, and strange, fearful sounds were borne on the air, and echoed by forest and mountain? The thought thrills our shuddering nerves with terror; yet he bore it, this lonely man, for twenty-five long years, resisting every temptation to leave his hermit-cell and return to the peaceful communities of Bollingen or Reichenau.

Such temptations fiercely assailed him, we are told, when the snow lay thick and deep on the mountain side, and the bitter blast howled through the crevices of his wooden hut. But he resisted all; having put his hand to the plough, he looked not back. Alas, alas! and all this to win a salvation whose one condition is simple acceptance of a free gift! But, oh! is there no lesson for us here—for us who have received that precious gift? Sadly

blinded and mistaken as were those poor strivers of old, do not their earnest, unshrinking endeavours to earn what we have freely received, rebuke our coldness, and carelessness, and indifference, our slothfulness and self-pleasing, our want of grateful love to Him whose love alone saves, whose grace alone sanctifies? Ah! man will do much, endure much, endeavour much, for self—for bad self or good self, for ungodly self or religious self; but he will do little, endure little, endeavour little—oh, how little!—for Christ—for Him who did all for him!

At last Meinrad's life was closed by what was accounted a martyr's death. It had been whispered abroad that the cell of the holy hermit of the Mythen contained precious treasure—gold, and gems, and costly things. The hundreds of pilgrims who resorted thither would scarcely come empty-handed. So two men resolved to take the life of the lonely man, who had left, more than a quarter-century before, all that makes life fair and valuable, that he might amass treasure in heaven. It was mid-winter, the snow lay thick and deep round the anchorite's cell, the gray sky lowered with coming storm, the wind wailed with dirge-like sound through the gloomy forest and round the rugged mountain-side. No pilgrim toiled up the rough, steep path, or shared the saint's solitary devotions. But two men climbed stealthily up to the snow-covered hut, glancing fearfully round, starting at each of the strange, sudden sounds that awoke in the forest depths, and looking with terror-stricken eyes into each other's blanched faces, as some gust swept by bearing on its sobbing breath a tone that seemed to their guilty hearts like the wail of a spirit departing in anguish and terror.

At last they reached the cell. A light gleamed from the chapel, and as they looked through the open doorway, they saw Meinrad saying mass before the altar, and alone.

Calmly, when the solemn rite was finished, the hoary saint confronted the men who he well knew sought his life, and kindly entertained them with such refreshment as he had. Untouched by his kindness, unawed by his piety, the murderers

struck him to the earth. Baffled in their purpose, even in its fulfilment—for no treasures were found in the hermit's cell—and terrified by the supernatural lighting of some tapers, they fled down the mountain, pursued, as the legend records, by the two tame ravens which had been the companions of Meinrad's solitude. This circumstance caused them to be stopped at the village of Wollerau, where the saint's ravens were recognized by the carpenter who had discovered his retreat, while the cell of the hermit was searched. His body was found lying unscorched at the foot of the altar, amidst the flames of the hut, to which the tapers had set fire. The murderers met a summary doom at the hands of the enraged villagers.

Such is the Story of St. Meinrad, the patron saint of the Abbey of Einsiedeln—a simple story, and less encumbered with the legendary and the marvellous than most such records. But it would be incomplete without its sequel—the legend that gave rise to the Festival of the Consecration of the Angels.

For many years after Meinrad's martyrdom the blood-stained cell was deserted. Few pilgrims were bold enough to traverse the gloomy shades to which a deed of darkness had imparted added horrors, when the good saint was no longer there to cheer and protect them with his counsels and his prayers. But at last, in 959, St. Eberhardt, Count of Franconia, built on its site a convent and chapel to the Virgin, to whom Meinrad had specially devoted himself. The night before the consecration of the new building, when Conrad, Bishop of Constance, was engaged in prayer before the altar with some of his monks, the chapel was suddenly illuminated with dazzling light, and the astonished and trembling monks beheld Christ and the Virgin standing upon the altar, shining with celestial radiance, and attended by the four Evangelists, and by St. Peter and St. Gregory. White-robed angels hovered round, scattering incense of the most ravishing odour, and the building was filled with strains of heavenly melody, proceeding from a choir of angelic singers led by St. Michael.

The vision faded, the monks fled in awe, but the bishop remained prostrate on the chapel pavement till eleven next morning, when he was discovered insensible. On relating what had happened, it was regarded as a dream, and after some persuasion he was induced to begin the rite of consecration. Hardly had he commenced it, when a mighty voice, which filled the building from crypt to roof, solemnly pronounced the words: "*Cessa, cessa, frater! capella divinitus consecrata est,*"* and the astonished and awe-stricken assembly fell prostrate in adoration.

The news of this miracle spread far and wide. Pope Leo VII. published a bull, in which he forbade the faithful to question the truth of this legend. He need scarcely have done so. Minds bowed by the trammels of superstition, hearts hungry for communion with that other world into which so many of their loved ones had already passed, to which their own footsteps were journeying, eagerly caught at any connecting-link between it and them. The one true and only link—the Daysman who could lay his hand on both, the "one Mediator between God and men"—they knew not. They knew not that the ladder reaching from earth to heaven was all Christ, from the first rung to the last, and they seized with avidity any floating thread of connection, even though it were light and frail as gossamer, that might help them upward. So from all parts of Europe they came, weary pilgrims and sad ones, sin-stained and conscience-stricken, empty-hearted and hungry-souled, to the place where the heavens had once been opened, over which the Virgin still extended her special favour and protection. The mysterious Delphic oracle, the magnificent Ephesian temple, never attracted more numerous or more blindly-devoted worshippers.

Such was the origin of the Abbey of Einsiedeln,—such the cause of the yearly celebration of the great Festival of the Consecration of the Angels, to which the usual concourse of pilgrims was wending its way.

* Stop, brother, stop! the chapel is divinely consecrated.

CHAPTER II.

THE NUN OF THE POOR CLARES.

“Unreconciled, as yet, to Heaven and grace.”—SHAKESPEARE.



AND now let us go back from the shadowy, legendary past, to the living, moving present ; from the story of the struggling saint of old, to the presence of the struggling sinners that were bearing their burdens and their hopes and their fears to his shrine.

The sun was sinking through a sky that glowed like a sea of molten gold and fire, already the deep valleys lay in cool shadow, but the mountain path was still bathed with light, and the snowy peaks of the distant Alps burned with amber glory, when a group of pilgrims, who had left the city of Zurich before his first rays had crimsoned the mountain-tops, toiled slowly up it. They had come, like many others from the same district, in one of the large square boats that had plied the calm waters of the lake so busily that day. It was less fatiguing than the more circuitous road that led over hill and valley, and one at least of that group seemed little able to bear strong exercise or exertion. She, a pale, delicate-looking woman, rode upon a mule, with a little girl of about seven years old before her. The rest of the party were on foot. The town of Richtenschweil, at which they had landed, was only some five or six miles distant from the abbey. The path was clearer then ; most of the pilgrims had already reached their destination, and those who remained

were scattered far apart, and were pressing eagerly on to reach their destination before nightfall.

It is a family group to which our attention is drawn, and their dress shows them to belong to the well-to-do burgher class, though something in the look and mien of that fragile woman, and of the graceful girl who walks lightly and easily beside her, might betoken higher origin. But there could be no question as to the station of the tall, portly, middle-aged man who leads the mule by the bridle; the cut of his garments of fine gray cloth, the huge leathern pouch or purse that hangs at his girdle, as well as the mingled shrewdness and caution of his clear cold blue eye, and the intelligence that marks his good, if somewhat heavy, features, indicate him as one of the leading merchants of the good town of Zurich. And such, in truth, he is: Hans Reinhardt, the wealthy silk-merchant of the High Street, whose warehouses occupy so prominent a place on the largest quay, so many of whose barges are even now wending their slow way along the Limmat and the Aar, on their way to distant towns. A prosperous man he is, honoured and respected; a member of the Great Council; honest and upright in all his dealings; a stanch advocate of liberty, proudly patriotic, but perhaps rather feared than loved in his own family circle, in which, as had ever been the case in Switzerland, until the corrupt fruits of foreign service began to ripen, his arbitrary will ruled supreme.

A contrast he is in every way to his refined and gentle wife, brought up from infancy in the stately old castle of Vaudemont, in Neuchâtel. Little was known of her antecedents in Zurich, and the quiet dignity of her manners had somewhat repelled the homely and rough advances of the burghers' wives, when first she came among them. But she had won her own way by the gentle sweetness that mingled with it, and by many a deed of loving sympathy and kindness in trial and sorrow; and few names were better known and loved in Zurich than that of Marguerite Reinhardt. Look at her now, as the golden even

ing light falls full upon her pale sweet face, from which her gray hood has been thrown slightly back, and seek to read the life-story it reveals.

It is a fair face still, though touched with time and sickness. We might say sorrow too, did we not know that the path of Marguerite Reinhardt had been one of unusual calmness and prosperity since she came as a young bride to the burgher's comfortable home—outwardly, at least. Ah! but there are ocean depths of meaning in these three words. Her face in youth must have been such as would have realized a painter's dream of the Madonna—delicately chiselled in feature, oval in form, with pure high brow, and dark pensive eyes. But now her cheek is sunk, and tinged only with one spot of hectic colour; the glossy bands of dark hair that shade her pale brow are thickly streaked with silver; and there is that about her—that undefined, undefinable something—that tells of one on whose ear has fallen the summons that none may disobey. Tenderly her young daughter watches her, as the mule ambles over the stony path; carefully her husband leads the animal from side to side, that it may pass over the smoothest places; and ever each word or deed of thoughtful love is met by a sweet look and smile of affectionate gratitude. But there is an abstracted, wistful look in the large mournful eyes; and the gentle mouth is set with lines that tell of patience, of waiting, of long unsatisfied yearning. Ay! the nectar of life has not satiated the cravings of that immortal spirit; her soul's fever-thirst is unquenched. The next day she will drink of the blessed well at which tradition says the Lord Christ himself once appeared, whose waters touched those holy lips. O poor earthly waters! like those of Sychar's well, they that drink of them will thirst again. Will no one bear to those parched lips a draught of the living water that flows from the throne of God?

As they pass onward, those lips move in prayer, and the wasted fingers diligently tell the beads of the rosary that hangs at her neck, even while the fatigue of the long journey is telling

heavily on the frail frame, and she gives but half heed to the prattle of the lovely golden-haired girl she holds before her, whose sweet childish voice incessantly pours forth exclamation and query, as one object after another attracts her fancy. Now it is the beauty of the string of bright-blue beads she carries in her hands, now the rich blossoms that cluster round their path, now a beetle or lizard that crosses it, now the gambols of a boy of some ten years old, who darts hither and thither, before, around, and behind them.

The young girl, of whom we have spoken before—a fair, bright-haired maiden of some sixteen summers, tall for her age, and singularly like her mother—is incessantly engaged in preventing the wild light-hearted and light-footed boy from incurring his father's anger, and the excited little one from disturbing the mother's devotions. But at last the golden head droops against the mother's breast; and Hans, having more than once scrambled to a point of dangerous eminence on the rocks which overhang their pathway, the father calls him to his side, and peremptorily orders him to remain there. Hans dares not disobey, though he casts many a sidelong look at the tempting incentives to adventurous climbing presented by the rocks above and the sloping wooded banks below. His attempts at conversation also being silenced, the little party proceeds quietly onward. As we have said, few pilgrims share the way with them.

About an hour previously a lonely nun had passed up the steep pathway. She wore the rough and scanty brown robe and black veil of the Poor Clares; and her dark complexion, bronzed by exposure, still more her dark full eyes and clear arched brows, bespoke her to be a native of some distant land. That worn, haggard face, with the large eyes, from which all the life and fire had long since faded, though the yearning and unrest of a weary, burdened spirit filled them still, spoke little of the peace and tranquillity and blessedness that were supposed to be the unfailing portion of the brides of Heaven in the holy cloister

calm by those outside its precincts. It was an old face—old in years, and old it seemed too in life's experiences; not with the pitiful wrinkled childishness that stood for age on the countenances of most of her class, and told of long wasted years, in which the spirit had slept while the mere animal life went on—not with the simple wearing out and decay of the natural bodily powers—but old with the exhaustion of life's fever, and bearing, on the furrowed brow and sunken cheek and round the pale close-set lips, the deep lines stamped by Time's brand-irons—grief, and pain, and fear, and all the mingling passions which make up the sum of life's conflict—its joys and its sorrows.

Few of the former had, it would seem, fallen to this poor woman's lot. If any, it must have been long, long ago, for their vestiges were gone—all gone. Slowly, wearily, with each step more painful than the last, she toiled on—onward and upward. The deep pallor of physical exhaustion was visible under the bronze of her dark cheek, her great hollow eyes grew dimmer and more fixed, her compressed lips paler still; yet she paused not. The sharp stones of the rocky road wounded her bare feet, swollen and blistered with long travel; but still she pressed on—onward, upward—with her straining eyes gazing straight before her, her bony fingers incessantly telling her beads, her white dry lips moving in prayer.

Many times some fellow-pilgrim had paused and reverently or compassionately offered help or refreshment, many a strong arm was proffered to aid the feeble steps, more than once a lift upon a donkey or mule; but to each and all the nun spoke the same words, in a dull, monotonous tone, like an echo from the tomb: "I am under a vow to reach the shrine of Our Lady at Einsiedeln, alone, and on foot—hinder me not! tempt me not!" And the pitying would-be helpers drew back, and gazed reverently on the gaunt wasted figure, and whispered that perchance she was a holy saint; and some returned to beg the prayers of the poor, weary, way-worn woman—worn and way-worn with long travel over another road besides the rocky mountain path

to Einsiedeln, wounded and bleeding with other stones than those which her bleeding feet crimsoned then.

Yet, as each long mile was traversed, the weary steps grew feebler ; each half, each quarter, at last every yard almost, told upon her failing strength. More than once she sank down for a few minutes on some mossy bank or fragment of rock, yet rose and struggled on. But as the sun's broad disc neared the western mountain range, she sank at last. A few uncertain, tottering steps more ; a quick instinctive glance round for the human help which nature, however repressed and subdued, ever seeks when her powers are failing ; a low despairing cry, and the nun sank senseless on the grassy bank, which there sloped gently back from the path. She fell in such a position as to give the impression to the passer-by that she had prostrated herself in prayer—one that would be strengthened by her hands still grasping the rosary. One or two pilgrims passed and glanced curiously at her, but it was no uncommon thing for a nun to prostrate herself thus, and they passed on, all being eager to reach the abbey, or at least be in sight of it, ere the sun set.

There she lay, helpless and totally unconscious, until the Reinhardt family approached. The extreme rigidity of her figure struck them all, and, at her mother's bidding, the young girl approached, and discovered her true condition. Little Hans ran for water from a neighbouring spring, while Madeline gently raised the nun's head, and threw back the thick black veil from the worn, pallid face. When her brow had been bathed, and a little wine from Herr Reinhardt's flask poured between her white lips, consciousness partially returned, and her dark heavy eyes opened wearily. But she was evidently wholly unable to resume her toilsome journey up the steep rocky road.

What was to be done ? The under edge of the sun's rim was nearing the western hills, the mists were rising damp and chill, the fragile invalid was already exhausted, yet no other

succour was at hand. She herself proposed that the weary nun should take her place on the mule, while she endeavoured to walk with her husband and daughter's help. But the former decidedly negatived this. "No, Marguerite, no," he said; "sorely against my judgment and my will have I suffered thee to undertake this journey, weak and unfit for it as thou art. I fear thy body will suffer more than thy soul will gain, if what I hear of this preacher's new-fangled teaching be true. But thou shalt at least not kill thyself outright. Thou art shivering already," he said tenderly, drawing her cloak closer around her, as the mountain breeze chilled her delicate frame; "and the wind will be keen when the sun is down. We must hurry on."

"Not and leave the blessed sister alone—sick and in need," his wife answered gently. "How could we approach the holy shrine to-morrow, how look for blessing from her whose daughter we should have so cruelly slighted? We must help her, Hans."

"Some one else will be passing presently," he replied, eagerly straining his eyes down the deserted road. In vain; no one was in sight, and after some further delay it was agreed that Madeline's proposal to remain with the exhausted nun until her father could return to them, or further help should arrive, must be accepted. Reluctantly Herr Reinhardt prepared to depart, first giving his daughter a wallet containing some food brought for the children, and the flask of wine, and bidding her endeavour to induce the nun to partake of it, as he doubted not her illness was the result only of fasting and exhaustion; and should her strength be sufficiently revived, to proceed at once towards Einsiedeln. He himself would return to meet them as soon as he had seen his wife safely lodged. Then taking the mule's bridle, and calling Hans to follow, he started on, casting one more fruitless glance down the quiet road that had lately been so thronged.

Then Madeline sat down beside the nun, who still lay motionless and half unconscious, and gently raising her languid head, pillowed it upon her breast. The slanting rays of the sun

lingered for a few moments longer upon that elevated spot ere he finally sank behind the western heights, bringing vividly out each line of the two faces turned towards him with the mellow brilliance of his parting rays. Startling was the contrast between them. Madeline had put back the wrappings from the nun's brow, thus revealing her short iron-gray locks, and the wan, haggard face, looked doubly old and worn in the golden sunlight, and in contrast with the fair girlish one that bent tenderly and closely over it; an expression of tender pity and awe resting upon the soft, gentle features, and filling the liquid hazel eyes, while the rich braids of bright brown hair caught the hue of the evening light and gleamed like massy gold.

For a time the nun lay still with closed eyes, but on Madeline speaking to her to urge her to take some refreshment to recruit her exhausted strength, she opened them with a quick, startled look, and fixed an eager, almost terrified gaze on the girl's face, raising herself to do so more effectually. So wild was the gaze of those dimmed, dark eyes, that a sensation of fear stole over Madeline's heart, which deepened as the nun whispered hoarsely, "Constance! Constance Zierotin! Am I dreaming?"

"Dear mother, you are faint, you are ill, let me bathe your brow, or give you some wine," said Madeline, really terrified.

But the nun seized her hand, and without removing her wild, sad gaze from her face, said, "Child! tell me! who art thou, and whence dost thou come?"

"I am Madeline Reinhardt, of Zurich."

The nun dropped the hand she had taken. "Strange," she murmured, "strange! voice and face so like. But perhaps—thy kindred? Whence come they?" she continued more calmly.

"My father is a Switzer born, my mother from Neufchâtel."

"And her name—her maiden name?"

"Marguerite de la Neige."

"And thou hast no kindred in Bohemia?"

"In Bohemia, no—oh no," answered Madeline, still doubtful as to whether the nun's illness had not confused her brain.

The latter turned her gaze from her and fixed it on the glowing western sky for a few moments. Then she said more calmly, "I have startled thee, my child. Thy voice and face seemed to me like those of one who has been in her grave—ah! how many years! yet whose face is as fresh in my memory now as it was the day after I last saw it in the sunset light—but oh! it was not like thine then!" and she shuddered. Some dark remembrances seemed to sweep over her, for she rocked herself to and fro, and murmured broken fragments of Latin prayers.

After a time she was persuaded to partake very sparingly of the food Madeline pressed upon her. Perhaps it was long since she had been alone with one so gentle and sweet as Madeline; perhaps it was the power of the old memories her face and voice awakened; or perhaps it was only that it was one of those hours when Nature will have her way and burst the strongest bonds. However that may be, the lonely, silent woman, who had crossed the mighty Alps from the distant Italian plains, alone, and on foot, as her vow demanded, and almost in silence, speaking not, save such words as were absolutely needful, shrinking from all notice, seemingly occupied with only one great purpose, to reach Our Lady's shrine with her vow unbroken, spoke that evening to the young girl beside her as she had spoken to none for a dreary waste of years.

She had come, she said, from near Florence, bound on a last pilgrimage and to fulfil a last vow. For the weight of more than sixty years was upon her, and not much time was left her to prepare for the summons that could not be very far distant. Yes, it was her last vow, and it was broken—broken like the rest. Broken like the hopes that had prompted her to it, leaving only despair in their place. For what grace could be hoped for by one who brought only a broken vow to lay on the Virgin's spotless altar; what hope of pardon could there be for one who had failed first and last,—whose heart beat still under

its girdle of knotted cord, untamed, unsubdued, vibrating still to old memories of earthly love and pain, in spite of long years of convent seclusion, of wasting penance and weary pilgrimage, of lonely wrestling with human feelings and remembrances—sin in one vowed to Heaven alone. Yes; they had been vain, all vain. The unsubdued flesh had failed once more, in sight almost of the very goal; the untamed heart had leaped up, with its pulses of earthly feeling beating high and strong, at the sound of a voice that fell upon it as an echo of the past that should be dead and buried, at the sight of a face that made the sorrow that was a shame and sin to *her* awake and cry out afresh.

Such was the purport of the words that dropped, faint and broken, from the nun's pale lips. At first she had addressed them directly to Madeline, but by degrees she seemed to have forgotten her presence, and spoke as to herself, her dark melancholy eyes fixed on the opal sky, her worn, wistful face, looking strangely weird in the peculiar light shed on it from the fast paling west.

Madeline sat still and listened, a strange awe falling on her young spirit. Conflict and sorrow, anguish and despair, were alike *words* to her yet, names as of some far-off untried land, on which her feet had never trodden, whose air she had never breathed. Her life had been so sheltered from storm, so bright with sunshine. Hitherto she had had all she asked for—love—and had only known suffering and grief through the sweet medium of ministering service. Perilous capacity for both lay in her nature. So witnessed the mobile, sensitive mouth,—the large, soft, hazel eyes, with that peculiar limpid light in them that tells of a temperament vibrating keenly to every touch of joy or pain,—the delicate colour that flushed and faded so quickly on her rounded cheek,—the low, broad brow, with its blue-veined temples.

Mingled were the expressions that flitted over that fair young face as she listened to the nun's broken words,—awe, surprise, perplexity. It had been her dream, that unbroken peace and

heavenly calm ever pervaded the cloister's precincts, and were the portion of the sainted ones who, relinquishing the joys and pleasures of the world, received full recompense for their sacrifice in their exemption from its trials and sorrows, still more in the deep, mysterious peace, that fell like heavenly dew upon their hearts—a peace that could never be the lot of those who were satisfied with earth for their portion. Such was the faith she had learned at her mother's knee, drunk in from her mother's lips. And that mother's teachings were her most sacred oracles. Yet here was one whose life had been spent from early youth within the convent's sacred walls, with hoary hairs and feet tottering on the verge of the grave, rent and torn with conflict such as she had never seen.

But Madeline's was not a nature that could see suffering, however much it was beyond her comprehension, without seeking to relieve it; and when at last the nun ceased speaking, and taking up her rosary began mechanically repeating a Pater, she said gently, laying her soft hand on the shrivelled wrist, "But, dear mother, the Holy Virgin is very merciful, and has great power with her Son. And is not full forgiveness promised to all who visit this blessed shrine at any time?—and to-morrow will be her special day. And surely to you, who have done and suffered so much for her sake, and to gain her favour, and only failed at last through bodily illness, she will grant that full forgiveness."

"Full forgiveness—full forgiveness," the nun murmured. "Oh! I have sought it high and low, at cross and shrine, in vow and penance, by fasting and prayer. But I have not found it—and I shall never find it. Forgiveness is for the worthy—the penitent. And such I can never make myself; never, never!—Child," she continued after a pause, in a voice stern in spite of its feebleness, "beware of turning a deaf ear to God's first call. If it come to thee, though the struggle rend thy heart in twain, rise up and obey. It is better thy heart should break at once than be torn by the sore conflict that has

tortured mine these years. Better a thousandfold lose the hopes of earth than peril those of heaven. Be warned by me. God claimed me, and I was refused him, while I was yet an unconscious babe. He called me when I was old enough to understand his voice. But earth was fair and life was sweet, and I refused to obey. He called me again yet louder, sending his summons through dying lips. For a time I wavered, but love was strong and my heart was passionate, and I clasped my idol to it, shutting my ears to that awful voice within me once more. Then God smote my idol. He did not speak that time, but struck the one for whose sake I had perilled my soul, to the earth with his lightning before my eyes. And then, when that thunderbolt had blasted and withered every flower on life's pathway for me, when earth was a blank and my heart was empty, I gave a late and vain obedience. Vain! for though the convent walls shut the outer world from me, they but shut in the dark memories of the past. Others found rest and peace; those that came in with eyes red with weeping, and faces pale with conflict, grew at last to have looks still and calm and expressionless as marble statues. But the fever of my heart burned on. I had chosen earth as my portion, and when I would have atoned for the guilty past, I found it ever not past, but present. And though, as long years wore on, the keenness and sharpness of anguish died down to the dull aching of hopeless endurance, and the mists of time softened the vivid outlines of past things, I could never gain the victory, as others have, over the earthly instincts and affections and memories to which I had so fatally yielded. It is the judgment of God—for more than forty long years I have striven against it. In vain! all in vain! Child, I charge thee, obey God's first call!"

Exhausted with the vehemence of her emotion, she sank back, and closed the dark eyes that had been fixed on the face of the shrinking girl while she had spoken. Trembling and terrified, hardly comprehending the words, and alarmed by the manner of the nun, Madeline's ear caught with inexpressible relief the

sound of voices joining in a hymn at no great distance, and almost at the same moment a group of peasants turned the corner of the road. The nun heard them too, and hastily drawing her veil over her face, she slowly and painfully rose with Madeline's help. But after a few weary yards she could go no further, and sank down again. Help was at last at hand ; the band of fellow-pilgrims came up, and the exhausted nun was placed on a mule they had with them, and its previous burden distributed among them. A few words from Madeline explained her position, and then the hymn was once more raised, and the little party moved onward.

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Madeline's mind, relieved from the immediate pressure of the nun's needs, reverted to her mother, and other feelings besides those of devotion filled her with joy when they at last came in sight of the abbey towers, only dimly visible through the gathering gloom. After the customary forms of prostration had been gone through, they proceeded onwards, descending into the green valley, on the wooded slope beyond which the abbey rose, with the town of Einsiedeln nestling at its feet. In the valley all was calm and still ; the breeze that had swept freely up the mountain-side only gently stirred the rustling leaves in its sheltered depths, the soft murmur of the stream that flowed over its rocky bed in its midst was distinctly heard,—no other sound save now and again the strains of a distant hymn reached the travellers' ears. The crescent moon gleamed like silver in the pale blue heavens, and stars began to peep tremblingly forth. It was a time for solemn and holy thought, and a religious awe seemed to have fallen even on the sturdy peasants. More than once Madeline spoke timidly to the nun, beside whose mule she walked ; but she answered not, and as she looked up into that fixed, stern face, it almost seemed as if that burst of violent emotion must have been a dream.

At the bottom of the valley Herr Reinhardt met them, greatly relieved to find his daughter so near the end of her journey. He had become alarmed at her long delay, but had

not been able to leave the mother, who had been seized on her arrival by one of the long and death-like swoons to which she was subject. Thoughts of that beloved suffering mother soon occupied the girl's mind to the exclusion of all others. Madeline's love for her mother was a passion—that mother was to her the embodiment of all that was wise and pure and good and holy. When, therefore, they reached the town, the streets of which were thronged with people even at that late hour, she forgot the nun, until her father reminded her of her by saying, "We might offer that poor nun a share of our room, Madeline, or she will probably have to lodge in the streets to-night; it will be impossible for her to reach the convent, and the town is crowded to the last degree." They at once retraced their steps. There stood the peasants and the mule, the former discussing with some acquaintances the possibility of obtaining a lodging; but the nun was gone. They said that directly they reached the borders of the crowd she had desired them to stop, and with a murmured "*Gratias Benedicite*," slipped from her seat and disappeared in the throng.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY MASS.

"Sounds of triumphant praise! The mass was sung :
Voices that die not might have poured such strains."—MRS. HERMAN.



THROUGH a number of narrow irregular streets the father and daughter passed. Wooden booths were erected along their sides—some for the use of pilgrims, others for the sale of various wares and refreshments—rendering the passage still narrower. At last they reached the house in which they were to lodge that night and the next. It was not an inn, but the dwelling of a widow who made an easy livelihood by taking in pilgrims. They entered first a long low apartment, round which shelves were arranged much in the manner of berths in a ship, on each of which was stretched a weary and, in most cases, sleeping pilgrim. Even the floor was covered with them. The hour was still early, but most of them had travelled far, and it was most important that each should be present at the early mass, two hours before sunrise.

A pleasant-looking woman, with soft blue eyes, and fair hair put back under a widow's coif, came forward and greeted Madeline with mingled tenderness and respect—the distinction of classes made little difference in those days in Switzerland. "Thou art pale and tired, my child," she said; "come with me into my room and take some supper. Thy mother is better, and sleeping quietly."

But Madeline excused herself, and went quickly and noiselessly into the one small upper room in which the family were to pass the night. A lamp burned dimly on the table, and by its light Madeline saw her mother stretched on a mattress in one corner, and little Hans and Clare fast asleep on a rug in another, the latter still grasping the precious necklace. One large wooden chair, two stools, and a table, were all the furniture of which the room boasted; and it had no ornament save a coarse daub of the Virgin visiting St. Meinrad in his cell, which hung upon one of the walls.

This room was always occupied by the Reinhardt family when they came hither. The mother preferred it to the bustle and confusion of the inn, and for other reasons. The pilgrimage was no form to her, no duty to be performed with the least possible discomfort and annoyance, but the earnest effort of a burdened and weary heart, seeking through it the peace and grace and pardon she knew not how to find otherwise. Year after year she had journeyed thither with the same yearning heart, year after year she had returned dissatisfied, empty, thirsting still. For one stream alone can quench the soul's thirst, and of those living waters no man gave her to drink. The last year—the first for many—she had been prevented by severe illness from paying her annual visit to the Virgin's favoured resting-place. For years her health had been delicate, and now she alone knew how frail the thread that bound her to life had become. Her children saw no cause for alarm in the weakness to which they had been so long accustomed—of the gradual increase of which they were unconscious.

Stern and cold as Hans Reinhardt appeared even to his children, to her he was ever tender and gentle, and he had long used himself to think of her as a being between a saint and an angel; and his love, like theirs, blinded him to the fact that something more than the old fragility and weakness had come upon his beloved wife. But when the Feast of the Consecration again drew near, and she had pleaded as a *last* request that he

would lay aside his fears for her body, and for the sake of her soul take her once more to that favoured spot, over which heaven had once opened, where prayers still found so ready an acceptance, where such miracles of grace and healing had been wrought, he awoke as from a dream ;—awoke to the bitter conviction that the gentle presence that had been the good angel of a life that would without it have been cold and hard and grasping, was melting gradually, imperceptibly, like snow from their own Alps, from his heart and home.

It was long before her most earnest pleadings could win his consent to her so far taxing her feeble strength, so much wasting the little that remained of the precious oil of life ; but at last he yielded to the pathetic mournfulness with which she urged her plea. Would not he, who had so striven to make a blighted life rebloom, so loved and shielded her from all outward trouble, been so ready to give her every earthly comfort, help her now to obtain what alone could avail her soon,—the Virgin's help to make her peace with God ? In vain he urged her pure and spotless life, her piety, her alms ; no human reasonings could subdue those soul-yearnings—for God had awakened them. And trusting that the rest of heart she would find in having performed a work that could not fail to have such extra merit in one to whose feeble frame it would be so great an effort, at last he yielded. Madeline had come to attend her mother ; little Clare had never been separated from her since she could remember, except on the occasion of her last pilgrimage. Hans was brought lest his mischievous tricks should excite Bertha's anger, and worry poor suffering Paul.

As Madeline noiselessly entered the room, her mother's eyes opened, and she smiled a greeting as her daughter knelt beside her low couch and tenderly kissed her pale cheek. "Did I wake thee, mother darling ? Widow Hartopp told me thou wert asleep."

"No, my child, I was not asleep ; but good Widow Hartopp's talk was too much for me, and I closed my eyes that she might

think so. She is a worthy woman, and kind ; but I am weary, Madeline !”

“ Ah ! why did I leave thee ? And, after all, it was of little use. But thou must try to sleep now, dear mother ; only let me make thee more comfortable first.” And with the tenderness of love, and the skill of long practice, she loosened her mother’s dress, smoothed her pillows, bathed her aching brow, and performed all those little nameless services which a quick eye and tender hand can ever make so valuable to an invalid, even under the most unfavourable circumstances.

Then Herr Reinhardt came in, and settled himself in the great chair, and soon the mother’s quiet breathing told that she had fallen into the heavy slumber of utter exhaustion. But it was long ere Madeline slept. In the stillness of the quiet room, where all slept but herself, the nun’s strange words came back to her with startling distinctness, and she longed with a deeper feeling than the mere curiosity and quick interest of a young sympathetic spirit to know more of the strange story whose dim outline had been so graphically sketched. That worn woman had once been young and hopeful and happy. Had she not said that life had been too beautiful and love too strong ? But oh ! had not such a long, long penance atoned for her sin—a sin, Madeline felt, that there were so many excuses for ? Who could leave home and friends and all life’s pleasant things without bitter pain ? And she remembered well the passion of bitter weeping with which her sister Bertha’s friend, Eustacie Stolberg, had bidden them farewell ere she left for the convent to which her fate rather than her choice consigned her.

And then those terrible words of warning flashed in upon her mind : “ Child, I charge thee, obey God’s first call ! ” What if God should call *her*—if that strange, mysterious, inner voice betokening a vocation for religion should awake in *her* heart, calling upon her to leave home and life and *mother* ? Her spirit sent forth a voiceless cry of anguish. Hers was a nature gifted with that intense realization that makes possibilities realities.

"Oh! I could not, I could not!" she said to herself; and her heart rose with an impulse of mingled dread and rebellion against a God who could thus demand such cruel sacrifices. She had hitherto thought only of the convent as a calm, sweet, peaceful retreat, for those whose earthly hopes were blighted, or whose spirits had been won over from earth to heaven. And she had supposed that the blessed repose and happiness they enjoyed there more than made up to them for all they left behind, and prepared for them a bright reward hereafter. But that day she had met with one called against her will to renounce the world, and that by God himself—one who had found in the cloister's cells no peace, no rest, no hope. Vainly she tried to turn away her thoughts—the nun's words had unsealed a fountain whose flow would not be stopped by all her efforts; and when she slept, it was to dream troubled dreams of convent gratings and iron-barred doors, into which the pale wan nun was leading her with resistless force, while her mother stood with sad face and outstretched hands, which she had no power to grasp.

But with the morning the trouble passed. Very early, long before sunrise, the abbey bells pealed out their summons to the first mass, which few of the pilgrims would miss. In spite of the entreaties of her husband and daughter, Marguerite insisted on going; she was rested and refreshed, she said, and they were very near the abbey. So, leaving the still sleeping children under the charge of Widow Hartopp, they proceeded to the Chapel of Our Lady. It was no easy matter to make way among the dense mass of pilgrims who were all pressing towards the chapel; the same heterogeneous mass that had yesterday thronged up the mountain road, only now packed in closer ranks, and jostling one another in the darkness.

It was a strange sight, the gorgeously decorated, brilliantly lighted chapel, into which Herr Reinhardt forced a way for his wife and daughter, when filled to overflowing with those who had been fortunate enough to gain admittance, many of whom

had passed the night in the square in front to secure entrance as soon as the doors should be opened. Besides the blaze of light on shrine and altar, every worshipper carried one lighted taper at least to place before the Virgin's shrine. Every head was reverently bent as every eye turned to that wonderful shrine, with its rich adornments, where stood the wonder-working image of the Virgin. There it was, a small image of painted wood, decked with rich robes and glittering with costly jewels. And it was to bow the knee and pour out the heart before *this* that those hundreds of immortal spirits had journeyed from far and near,—some from distant lands, some from neighbouring Alpine homes,—some in holiday garb and easy manner, some, like our poor nun, with bitter toil and pain. Oh! sight to make angels weep—to make devils smile!

Are none such seen now, in temples which no outward image defiles and desecrates, but where the shadow has taken the place of the substance, the form that of the spirit?

But One was looking down upon it all—ay, and upon the *hearts* of the worshippers. Did he find among them none of his hidden ones—none upon whom he had breathed the breath of life—none whose straining eyes were looking through the dim mists and shadows of error and superstition to the cross of the Crucified rather than to intercession of Virgin or saint? Ah! we know there were many. The love that forbears so long and so much with us whose favoured lot is cast in the broad daylight of gospel truth, might well lead the blind wanderers of that night without stars, through paths that they knew not, to himself.

The mass was said: sounds of triumphant praise filled the chapel, scarcely less sweet, the worshippers thought, than those which swelled through it once from the celestial choir; indeed there were some whose pious ears believed they caught other than earthly strains even then; clouds of incense floated on the air—the upturned faces of the crowd seemed to glow with a strange light, and a thrill of rapture and enthusiasm ran through every frame.

Then one by one the worshippers pressed forward with their offerings to the shrine. A constant stream would come and go before it all day, and as soon as possible Herr Reinhardt led away his wife. Seeing how pale and exhausted she looked, a monk came forward and offered to let them through a small postern door.

"Thanks, father," replied Herr Reinhardt; "my wife is ill able to bear such fatigue; but she would not miss the early mass."

The monk looked at the pale face of the invalid, on which rested a strangely wistful expression. Perhaps she had found less comfort than she hoped for in the past service, to which so high a value was attached.

"I would miss no means of grace," she said sadly; "I sorely need them. And this is one of special value, father, is it not?"

The monk hesitated, coloured, then answered evasively, "All are good, used rightly."

"Yes," she said mournfully; "but our hearts are so weak, so earthly, even when earth is slipping from under our feet."

The monk unlocked a side-door of a small chapel in silence, then, having given them the customary benediction, said, "You will come and hear the sermon this morning, I trust. I think that will help you," and closed the door.

"I do not know about that; I have heard strange things said of this preacher. Canon Schönbrunner has already denounced him as an innovator, if not a heretic. If so, we were better without hearing him."

But when the ceremony of drinking the waters of the blessed well in the Abbey Square had been gone through, and they reached their lodging again, Widow Hartopp spoke with earnest enthusiasm of the newly-appointed preacher. "Ah!" she said, "people say, I know, that he preaches strange things and strange doctrines. But they are good things and good doctrines; and put in words that you can understand. They have made me a happier woman than I ever was in my life

before—yes, even than when my poor Walter was with me. For then I was always afraid that something would happen to break my happiness. I was afraid God would be angry with us for being too happy. When he took our little Lieschen from us, I was more afraid than ever. And that dreadful day on which my dear, dear husband was brought home a shattered corpse, dashed to pieces in a moment by his fearful fall down that frightful precipice, I felt what a terrible thing it was to displease such a God. The thought of my Walter's poor soul passed into eternity without a moment's warning, without the holy rites of the Church, weighed upon me night and day. I would have gone into a convent to spend my life in prayers for it, but for little Walter. And then by degrees I got hard and cold, and thought where my Walter went I would go. You know he would not go to mass, or do like the rest. He had some sentences in his head that he had learned out of an old book his grandmother used to read to him, and he said they were more to him than mass or priest. And the first time I heard this preacher he preached from the very words Walter so often repeated, and which he loved so well. And he said they were God's words. These were they: 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;' and the sermon was all so beautiful, and new, and sweet, I could scarcely think I heard aright. But one day, as I saw him passing, I made a bold venture, and went and spoke to him, and told him my story. Then he came into my house and sat down with me; and oh! the load that went from my heart as I listened to his words. For he said Walter was no heretic for believing those words and loving them, as some said; for they were God's words: and he did not seem to think it would make so much difference his not having been confessed and anointed. He told me the God I was so much afraid of was a God of love, and that he and the Lord Christ loved even such as I. Ah! I can't tell you the words he said then or since, but they are *here*," and she laid her

hand on her heart. "And I am happy because I know, I *feel* the Lord Christ loves me, though I am such a poor sinful woman ; for he said himself that he came 'to seek and to save that which was lost ;'—that was another of Walter's sentences. Did you not ask me, Frau Reinhardt, where my old sorrowful looks were gone, and what made me so smiling and happy ? It is all because I know now the Lord loves me, and I am sure he will forgive the sins for which he was willing to die !"


At this moment the widow was called from below, and silence fell upon the party. Herr Reinhardt stood at the window, looking out into the garden in which Hans and Clare were playing with the widow's little son. Madeline sat by the couch on which she had tenderly laid her weary mother, with her chin resting upon her hand, and her soft eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the floor. And the mother ! One hand was in Madeline's, the other grasped tightly a small crucifix of ebony and ivory, upon which her gaze was intently settled. There was a faint flush upon the cheek, an eager expression, half hope, half fear, on the sweet delicate face.

When at last Herr Reinhardt broke the silence, it was by saying, discontentedly, "It is even as I thought ; this preaching savours of heresy ! I like not these new-fangled ways. Fancy a preacher sitting down to explain his sermon to a poor ignorant woman, who has evidently quite misunderstood it after all ! Indeed, I do not see the use of all this preaching. Let people hear mass, and say their prayers, and pay their dues, and leave the rest to the priests."

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S WAY AND MAN'S WAY.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISAIAH lv. 8, 9.

T was the hour of sermon. In the gorgeously-decked, brilliantly-lighted, incense-pervaded Chapel of Our Lady of Einsiedeln a vast concourse of people was assembled. Throughout the day the aisles had been filled with a moving mass of pilgrims, eagerly pressing forward to the shrine with their prayers and offerings; but when at last the preacher—whose voice was yet to ring throughout the length and breadth of that mountain land, and beyond it, summoning his countrymen to rouse and shake off the chains, not of Austria, as her heroes had done of old, but of Rome; to be no longer the Pope's bondmen, but Christ's freedmen—ascended the pulpit, a solemn stillness, a deep hush of expectancy rested upon the waiting multitude. For that preacher—a noble-looking man, in the prime of early manhood, with striking, expressive features, and dark, piercing eyes—was Ulric Zwingle, the morning-star of a brighter day for Switzerland.

In a voice that rang through the building, he gave out his text: "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

Startling words to fall on the ears of those who had indeed come thither to seek much-needed forgiveness, but certainly not through Christ, of whom many had but the vaguest and most

confused ideas ; upon whom others looked only with shrinking dread, not as a Saviour able and willing to save to the uttermost, but as a Judge as hard and terrible as holy, needing the propitiation of a mother's intercession to move him to one pulse of grace or pity ; to move him—him who died for the ungodly, who freely gave the costliest pledge of a *friend's* devotion—his own life-blood—for his *enemies* !

“ ‘The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,’ ” said the preacher.* “And who is this Son of man ? The Eternal Son of the Eternal Father ; the Babe of Bethlehem, the Victim of Calvary, the Risen of Olivet, the Enthroned at God's right hand ; he unto whom all power in heaven and earth is given ; he who came down from his Father's bosom to be scorned and crucified on earth—who left heaven's brightest glory to make of himself an offering for sin once and for ever, to pour out his blood upon the cross, and thus make full satisfaction for the sins of all who believe in him, and accept him, and him alone, as their Saviour.

“He came to do that, and he did it. ‘It is finished !’ he cried, ere his spirit passed. What was finished ? The work he came to do. ‘I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.’ And that work ? The Father's will—‘to seek and to save that which was lost.’ ‘The Lord made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all.’ He was ‘made sin’ for us. He ‘put away sin’ by the sacrifice of himself.

“That was the true sacrifice—the true offering—the only one God desired—the only one God could accept. See the magnitude, the worth of the sacrifice ! No earthly treasure, but the Divine Son of God ; no mortal blood, but the precious life-tide of that spotless, holy, undefiled heart of Christ. A great sacrifice, and for a great end—the salvation of a world lying in darkness and the shadow of death ; of a race of sinful, helpless beings, ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ But it was great enough even for this.

* This sermon is historical in text and subjects dwelt upon.

“Yes, the sacrifice is enough for God. The Holy Scriptures tell us so. They tell us that it is enough for a poor sinner to take Christ's perfect and accepted sacrifice in his hand, and approach God without fear, as a gracious and reconciled Father. God wants nothing more ; Christ is enough for him.

“Not so for man. In his blindness and pride man must toil, and strive, and labour, and fast, and pray, and seek to save himself.

“Christ says, ‘Unto him that is athirst will I give of the fountain of the water of life *freely*.’

“Man says, ‘No ; you must earn, you must merit, you must buy it.’

“God says, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath *no money* ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money* and *without price*.’

“Man says, ‘Bring gold, bring jewels, bring silver to altar and shrine, and so purchase your pardon.’

“Which will ye have—God's way, or man's way ? Ye must answer this question before God to-day. I tell you, Christ ALONE saves, and saves FREELY. Christ ALONE saves, and saves EVERYWHERE.

“Ye have come, some of you, from distant lands, through danger and toil and long travel, to seek the forgiveness ye indeed sorely need, each one of you, whether ye feel it or not. Ye have, many of you, brought costly offerings to this shrine ; doubtless, all of you, such as ye could bring. Ye have come to fulfil vows and repeat prayers that ye may obtain Our Lady's grace. But it is God's grace you want ; and that, I tell you, on the authority of his unerring Word, is given freely to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

“And think you to be nearer heaven here, in this Abbey and Chapel of Our Lady of Einsiedeln ? Whatever be the country in which you dwell, God encompasses you, and hears you there as well as here. His presence fills heaven and earth. But it is no more in this place, to which you have come with so much

toil and pain, than in any other part of his creation. * Christ is EVERYWHERE, and he saves EVERYWHERE.

"You look up at the abbey gate, and see inscribed above it, 'Here is obtained a plenary remission for all sins;' and ye think to obtain it by money, or by repeating many prayers in many words, by drinking the blessed waters of Meinrad's spring, by invoking the Virgin's grace and intercession. But, I tell you, Christ ALONE saves, here and elsewhere. What avail your long pilgrimages, even if ye make them with bare and bleeding feet? what your shirts of hair and your girdles of ropes? what your long robes and shaven crowns? God looks to the heart!

"God looks to the heart, and our hearts are alienated from God. Sin, like a black and heavy cloud, has risen up between them and God. We know it, we feel it.

"What must we do, then? Fast, pray, mortify our bodies for the iniquity of our souls? Call on those who once struggled with the like? No. Christ ALONE saves. 'There is one God, and ONE Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for ALL.' And that one Mediator declares, 'Him that cometh unto ME I will in no wise cast out.' But it is 'unto ME.'

"'The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.' When he was on earth he said to the guilty one taken in adultery, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' To the woman that was a sinner, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Go in peace.' The thief on the cross and the faithless saint, Peter, were alike forgiven, and on the same grounds.

"He had 'power on earth'—how much more now in heaven! the work of salvation finished, the victim slain, the blood shed, the sacrifice accepted!

"'To forgive sins.' Not some sins—little sins, excusable sins, venial sins,—but 'sins' of whatever class or hue. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' ALL!

"To those here who think to content God with the husks of outer observances, the chaff of hollow form; to win their salva-

tion by useless works and vain repetitions of prayer that are words only—words whose meaning even, perchance, they know not—I would say, God looks upon the heart, and Christ **ALONE** saves.

“And to those burdened with sin, oppressed in conscience, and sad of heart, yearning for pardon, and longing for reconciliation with that God before whom all—rich and poor, noble and peasant, churchman and layman—must alike stand at last, I also say, Christ **ALONE** saves—saves freely, saves fully, saves to the uttermost. On the rock of his eternal word I take my stand. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that word shall not pass away.

“Go to your homes, your families, your convents, bearing these words, the vehicles of God's unchangeable truth in your hearts and minds: ‘Christ **ALONE** saves, and saves **EVERYWHERE!**’”

The preacher ceased, and a stillness filled the crowded building like that which succeeds a mighty thunder-peal, that has left all hearts palpitating and thrilling. For that sermon was at once like a thunder-peal and a trumpet-blast ringing forth the charging cry;—like the first, because the power that sent it forth was from above; like the second, because it did call to battle, not against flesh and blood, but against error and superstition, against “spiritual wickedness in high places.” Not as we have briefly given them, but with a fervid, impassioned eloquence were those mighty truths—so old, yet so new to those who heard them that day—poured forth. How fell that precious seed! On rock and thorn and wayside, doubtless; but some, as ever, though often known only to the Great Sower, on “good ground,”—good, because prepared by the furrowing of God's plough, and softened by the dew of his Spirit, without which man's most diligent and faithful sowing must ever be in vain.

But soon the hush was broken. The pilgrim mass was in motion once more. Many feet echoed again through the building, and low whispers were muffled by their sound and the

sweep of many garments. Some—ah ! who would doubt that there were many—left the chapel without their burdens, with hearts rejoicing, like hers whom they came to worship, in God their Saviour, tasting the sweetness of forgiveness, and resting in the love and grace of that Saviour ; others seeing dimly, on the far-off eastern horizon of their faith, a faint streak that heralded the dawn of a light that would shine more and more unto the perfect day. But some in horror, real or feigned ; some in indignation ; some in sharp conflict between the faith of their fathers, and the new, strange doctrine that had fallen so sweetly on their ears, and opened so clear and welcome a path to heaven ; some unmoved and untouched, wondering what was in the preacher's words that had so stirred their fellow-hearers ; some bore away the paltry tapers they had brought to place on the shrine unlighted and unused ; some hastened as eagerly as before to perform the prescribed round of devotion.

However, we have only to do with those to whom our tale refers. How had that sermon fallen on Madeline's heart ? Not upon ground as yet prepared by the Great Husbandman. So she listened, but as to the strains of some sweet but unfamiliar melody, that aroused no answering chord in her heart. And while the sermon was yet only half over, she had seen what had turned her thoughts into a new channel, and had made her for a time almost entirely unconscious of the sense of the preacher's words.

On the other side of the pulpit, in the front row of seats, exactly facing Madeline, were several nuns. She had examined each muffled figure before, but without discovering any likeness to the one she sought. But chancing to take her eyes from the preacher's face, and look towards them, she saw that haggard, passion-worn countenance in the second row. The veil was thrown partly back, and the face fully exposed to view. There was something at once startling and pathetic in the intense eagerness with which the nun drank in the preacher's words—her dark, sunken eyes fixed immovably upon him, her lips

parted in strained eagerness to catch each one. Not once did that expression of concentrated, passionate, eager interest relax or change. Madeline watched it with mingled wonder and compassion and hope. Would she find what she had vainly sought so long—forgiveness, peace? To this her unchanged look gave no clew. Only she drank in those sweet, strange words, as a perishing wanderer on the scorching desert sands might drink down the crystal draught borne to his parched lips from some unseen, unexpected well by unknown hands, when all hope had fled, and life's last gasp was drawing near.

At the close of the sermon, Madeline determined to follow and address her. But little Clare had fallen into a deep, heavy sleep, and awoke confused and frightened; and while Madeline was rousing and soothing her, the people began to sweep past, and the nun disappeared. When Madeline and the children reached their lodging, they found their parents there before them. Widow Hartopp was in the room, attending to the invalid; and Herr Reinhardt was speaking in a loud, angry voice.

"I tell you, it is rank heresy," he was saying; "the empty, profane jargon of one who would sell his soul to get the world's ear by something new. And men's ears itch for such things now-a-days, no longer content with the faith in which their fathers lived and died; better men and nobler than they will ever be—God rest their souls! Not but what he says of the tyranny of Rome and the ill-practice of churchmen is true enough. But to rail at pilgrimages, and scout good works, and dishonour the holy saints and Our Blessed Lady, and to say God gives forgiveness freely, is quite another thing. Have all our teachers been wrong these fifteen hundred years, and has this shepherd-lad of the Sentis been the first to discover the truth? Whence has he had all this wisdom, forsooth?"

"Ah, sir!" said Widow Hartopp, "from God's Word—from the Holy Scriptures themselves."

"The worse for him, if it be to pervert it to his own wicked ends, and ruin souls by setting up other teachings than those

of the Holy Church. It is to be hoped such profanity may soon be stopped,—and here of all places, whence the seeds of his false teachings may be scattered far and wide. How come the authorities at the abbey to allow it? Theobald of Geroldsek is a wise man, and pious.”

“Ah, sir, and therefore he called Zwingli hither from Glaris, where he was loved and honoured; and they are of one mind. The good Abbot Conrad, too, studies the Holy Scriptures; and many others in the monastery. And they think the day is coming when God's blessed words, so long hidden by the monks, may be known to all. And I pray that day may indeed be near; for sweet is the hope and peace they have brought to me. And, sir,” she continued, “if the love of God did not stir up the heart of the good priest, think you he would so stand in his own light? Do you not know that the offerings against which he preaches form almost the sole income of himself and of the administrator Geroldsek?”

“It is fame he seeks, perchance, not money,” said Herr Reinhardt, impatiently turning away; and the widow being summoned from below, the conversation dropped.

The short autumn evening closed in, and the hours wore on tediously. Herr Reinhardt was a reserved, taciturn man, and sat silent for the greater part of the time; and his grave, stern presence, was ever a check upon Madeline. The mother lay still on her couch, with a look of rest and peace on her face, something like a smile on her gentle lips, yet with tears ever and anon coursing slowly down her pale cheeks. Madeline watched in anxious perplexity, longing to be alone with her. Some change had evidently come over her, scarcely of pain. Yet why did she weep? Little conversation passed. Some allusion to the morrow's journey (for though the festival really lasted three days, they were to leave early in the morning), references to Paul the crippled sufferer at home, and more than once strong denunciations on the father's part of innovations and heresy, were all. More than once the mother's pale lips parted as

If to speak ; but she had been too accustomed to keep her thoughts to herself. There was too little fellow-feeling and sympathy between two natures so wholly opposite as hers and her husband's—deep and absorbing as was his love for her, submissive and grateful as was her affection for him—to admit of much heart intercourse or communion of spirit. And the gentle spirit shrank sensitively from exposing the new joy it had found to rough and heedless handling ; the feeble frame was exhausted and weary.

But when at last her husband slept soundly in his great chair, she said, when Madeline asked if she needed anything, “ Yes, my child ; I have something I would say to thee now : sit beside me a while.”

“ Art thou not too weary, mother darling ?”

“ No, my daughter ; I would tell thee what this day has brought me. O Madeline ! such rest, such peace ! Such joy as I have known, I know not how or why, was to be found—could be found—such as I felt I must find before I died. I have sought it, as thou knowest, Madeline. Ah, I always knew how unworthily, how feebly ; now I see how blindly. For I sought a rose on a barren thorn, sweet waters in a stagnant ditch, life where only death could be. One day I will tell thee more ; I would that thou shouldst know the full story of my life,—what I have hitherto kept folded back in my heart, thinking it best there. But thou art like me in temper and disposition, and I would save thee from the rocks on which I struck my bark. Nay, my Madeline, look not so startled ; it is no strange story. And it is not of that I would speak now, but rather, lest no other time be given me to do so, of the peace that has come to me. Thou knowest how I withstood thy father's commands, and Paul's regrets, and Bertha's displeasure, and thy pleadings, darling, that I should not wear myself with this journey. But, Madeline, I felt I *must* come. That voice within me that has ever whispered, but never so loudly or plainly as of late, of a light I had not, a grace I found not, a

peace I knew not, yet existing somewhere and for me, seemed to bid me go to Einsiedeln and find it there. I came full of trust in Our Lady's grace. And yet not wholly so. Once I was. But of late—ay, for years past—my heart has turned most to the Lord Christ himself, though I have never dared to speak my thoughts. Ah, child, I cannot tell thee what this crucifix has not told me of his suffering and his love! and, oh, how I have longed to please him and to be holy! But I could do nothing but sin. Between me and that holy, spotless Sufferer rose my sin, my earthly affections, my feeble faithlessness; and when death drew near last year, my spirit was overwhelmed with terror. And now, Madeline, my Madeline, when I heard once more his coming footsteps in my increased weakness, I felt I must make one effort more to find what I have sought so long in vain. Madeline, I have found it! Thou heardest as well as I the good news that was preached to us this day. Thy father thinks it heresy. But, Madeline, it is truth, God's truth, and will prevail. Oh, surely it never had entered into *man's* heart to plan *such* a salvation. How can we look at this crucifix and think that wondrous Victim a hard Judge? how fear the God that gave so great a gift for us? What could all the treasures of the earth, all the tears and prayers and merits of the best and holiest, be worth, compared with such an offering? Offered *for* us—*instead* of us! And yet I have done so. I thought I was not worthy to share in the merits of that sacrifice, and I feared the God who gave his best for us—for the unworthy. But it is past now. I weep, Madeline, but it is for joy, for love. It was not the voice of Ulric Zwingli that spoke to me to-day; it was Christ's voice. I hear it now, and it says, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' His forgiving love fills my heart, and I rest on his breast. Now, Madeline, I am ready to go to him. You will all miss me, darling; but let me go, for I am weary. And I think a brighter day is dawning for Switzerland. This blessed light which floods my soul will fill her hills and valleys, her hearths and homes. And He who has been so

gracious to me will care for thee, my Madeline, and all my loved ones, when I am gone."

"Mother, dearest mother, why dost thou speak thus? Thou art not ill; only weak, as thou hast been for long. Herr Cotter says thou art better. Mother dearest, speak not thus, it thou lovest me!"

But Madeline's words of agitation and distress broke the slumbers her mother's low tones had failed to disturb; and her father angrily bade her be silent and let her mother get some rest if she could. She never dared to question or disobey his wishes, and, in spite of the anxiety and terror with which her mind was filled, she at once obeyed. But ere she lay down by her mother on the pallet, she knelt for a moment beside it, and was drawn closely to that beloved sheltering breast on which as yet every sorrow and perplexity had been poured out. Could it be that she was about to lose that precious place of refuge?—that the dear presence and watchful love that had been around her whole life was about to become a thing that was? The thought was too terrible.

Her mother whispered, "Good night, my own, my darling. Pray, Madeline, and to *Him*. He will hear; he will help; he will do right; for he is love!" A passionately loving embrace was her answer.

Then she lay down and thought; and if she prayed, it was only that that dreadful thing might not be, and not for the grace, and help, and pardon of which as yet she had never felt the need. Indeed, the idea that her idolized mother believed herself about to leave them completely excluded all others; and if she thought at all of the spiritual peace she had found, it was only to feel increased distress and alarm. The love and presence of Jesus in life, at anyrate in a secular life, were almost wholly unrecognized possibilities in those clouded times; and she shuddered to find in her mother's strong consciousness of both a probable token that her bodings were only too true. Then she pictured home without her:—her father's stern, silent

grief, little Clare's anguish of childish sorrow, Paul's despair : she could go no further ; she dared not think of herself. " O God, if thou art indeed willing to help ; if indeed thou lovest and pitiest us, spare her—oh, spare her !" she moaned in the depth of her heart. " Oh, blessed Mother, plead for us—oh, plead with thy Son, for thy dear sake, to spare us ours !" and then a burst of silent tears relieved her. And it seemed as if in them the terror melted away. With the elasticity and hopefulfulness of youth her spirits rose again. After all, there was no cause of alarm ; she was sure her mother was stronger now than she was before the malignant fever which brought her so low the previous year ; the hot summer weather, the parting from Max and Friedel, Paul's more than usual suffering and depression, all had wrought upon her. And now this long fatiguing journey. Oh, it was quite enough to account for those fainting-fits having been so much more frequent. Herr Cotter said she was better, and her uncle Andrew had thought her looking so. True, he had seen her last on his way to Venice, when she was only just recovering from the fever ; but oh, she was—she must be better. To-morrow she would watch her closely, closely ; see if there were indeed any fear, any danger. And they must all redouble their careful, loving tending. With these hopeful, reëssuring thoughts, Madeline fell asleep.

And the morning brought more than hope—confidence. Her mother's eye was clear and bright, a delicate flush of colour rested on her usually pale cheek, and there was a ring of gladness in her voice, an ease in her movements, and a lightness in her step, such as she had not seen for years past. Ere the morning sun had reached the depths of the green valley of the Alb they were on their way homeward. Herr Reinhardt was relieved that his wife at once yielded to his wishes, and made no point of paying as usual a farewell visit to the shrine and well. Early as it was, Madeline had been astir before, partly to offer prayers for her mother where they might find most acceptance—ah, Madeline was of those who

had heard in vain yesterday that Christ ALONE saves, and saves EVERYWHERE !—partly in hopes of meeting her friend the nun. But though she saw many hooded figures, both there and on their homeward way, and peered anxiously into each quiet, placid face, she saw not the one she sought. How was it with that poor, troubled heart, that weary, burdened spirit? Had a voice greater than that of Ulric Zwingle spoken to her, as to Marguerite Reinhardt, saying, “Thy sins be forgiven thee”? Madeline would fain have known this; the deep interest roused by the stricken, sorrowful stranger, would be slow to die down in that warm young heart; and it had been increased by the knowledge that there was power in the words to which she had listened with such burning eagerness to bring rest and peace such as shone in her mother’s eyes.


All through that day Madeline watched her mother eagerly and anxiously, but hopefully. There was a deep serenity on her brow, a soft bright light in her eyes, and a sweet grave smile on her lips. She seemed unconscious of fatigue, and keenly enjoyed the beauty of the lovely scenes through which they passed. Once, when she returned with Hans from exploring a rocky dell, Madeline found her speaking earnestly to her father, one thin, blue-veined hand resting on the rough brown one that held the bridle, and tears falling fast, though the quivering lips smiled still. The father looked perplexed and doubtful. Madeline felt sure she was speaking to him as she had done to her the previous night.

At length the long steep mountain-path was descended, and after a brief rest at Richtenschweil, the party were gliding swiftly over the blue waters of the lake towards the city that crowned its northern extremity.

CHAPTER V.

PAUL.

"The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun."—LONGFELLOW.

"S the light too strong for thee, Paul? shall I draw the curtain?"

"Thou knowest I cannot bear to be smothered up."

"Nay, but the sun is full on thy face; surely it must make thine eyes and head ache."

"That they may well do, in this close room, with no breath of air."

"Wouldst have the window opened then?"

"Thou knowest I always have it opened when the sun is hot."

"Thou saidst the wind was too strong just now, brother" — but the speaker rose, opened the casement and drew forward the curtain, so as to shield the invalid's face. The wind was strong, and the curtain flapped backwards and forwards, drawing forth an impatient toss of the sufferer's frame.

"Thou seest it is too strong. Shall I close the casement?"

"Oh, do what thou wilt, so thou leavest me in peace. Madeline asks me no questions; she always knows what to do."

The watcher closed the window, but that again did not please; and it cost her some patience and the invalid much chafing ere the curtain was securely fixed and the casement

placed at the right angle. Then her attempts at conversation having been impatiently silenced, she again took up her knitting.

For a time there was stillness, broken only by the rattle of the knitting-pins, but at last the sick youth burst forth, "Canst thou not knit with less noise? that click, click, click of thy pins will drive me crazed."

"I did not know it disturbed thee, Paul; I will lay it down." And she suited the action to the word, and sat gazing sadly at the poor invalid's pain-drawn face.

And it was in truth a sad sight to meet a sister's eyes, or any eyes. The sufferer was a boy, really of about eighteen years, though the slight wasted figure might have belonged to one much younger. He lay, wrapped in a loose robe, on a luxuriously cushioned couch, in an apartment furnished with great comfort according to the ideas of the times; the large window was hung with curtains of soft green damask, the couch covered with the same, and numerous little articles of use and ornament gave the room an air of refinement as well as comfort. A vase of rather faded flowers stood in the window; it was Clare's task to fill it, and in her absence Paul—for this sufferer was Paul Reinhardt—would not have it touched. The room was evidently at once chamber and sitting-room: a bed stood at one end. The window, near which the couch was placed, commanded a lovely view;—first, of a large garden sloping down in terraces; then, over the red-tiled roofs of some houses, of the blue waters of the lake; beyond the sloping and richly-wooded banks of which rose the snowy crests of the Albis range, now gleaming with the gold and crimson hues of the setting sun, the slanting rays of which rested on the sufferer's wasted face. A wasted face indeed, so young in years, yet so old in suffering. Is there not ever something in an *old* young face that makes the heart ache?

And Paul's was a face that would have been very beautiful had it worn the glow of health and hope. But now the broad,

white, blue-veined brow, and the large, dark, brilliant eyes in their purple hollows beneath it, looked disproportionate to the thin sunken cheeks and small delicate features, cast in a mould of perfect symmetry, but pinched and sharpened by pain. The long dark hair, tossed wildly about the green pillow on which the head rested, brought out the worn white face, colourless except where a feverish spot burned on each wasted cheek, with painful sharpness of contrast. His restless movements had thrown the large cushions on which he lay into most comfortless confusion, but he had pettishly refused all his sister's attempts at arranging them; she made them still worse, he said.

Paul Reinhardt was no patient sufferer. As is often the case, in that frail crippled frame dwelt a strong, eager, restless spirit, full of high dreams and aspirations; that broad brow betokened no common intellect; those lustrous, changing eyes, no ordinary soul. Better it had not been so, those who loved him thought; then might he have been spared those mental conflicts which intensified and almost exceeded his keen physical sufferings. Those passionate longings for the gift of bodily strength common to all, and without which all his dreams of fame were indeed vain and idle; those deep, unfathomed yearnings that made his couch and narrow chamber so truly a prison to him; the wild, restless chafing against the iron chain of a cruel fate,—all conspired to turn his soul's sweet waters to gall and bitterness, and render him peevish, wilful, exacting, even where most he loved and trusted. And none knew and mourned that this was so more than he himself did. With a heart capable of the deepest affection and most generous feelings, vibrating to everything high and noble, he felt himself sinking into a miserable and worthless being, a torment to himself, and a grief to those who loved him so tenderly and cared for him so devotedly.

And this because hope was dead in him, the hope that had lured him on for five weary years. He had been frail and

delicate from his birth, but it was not till his thirteenth year that the first of the terrible abscesses in his joints had formed, from a succession of which he had suffered ever since, and which had left him a crippled and emaciated sufferer. But the doctors—and his father had had the advice of many of the best money could procure in those days—ever spoke of *hope*, of a time when the disease would have spent itself. And this hope, far-off as it might be, and to be realized only after years of tedious pain and weakness, had been the goal to which he looked. At such times as he was able he had learned from his gentle, studious, elder brother, Friedel, all that the latter learned at school; and little as was that all, it was a key whereby he could unlock untold treasures. Eagerly he studied when a brief gleam of improvement in his health gave him opportunity, that when the time of release from his prison-chamber came, it might not find him wholly unprepared. But one dark day, many months before—months that seemed longer to him in their bitter pain of hopelessness than the years that had gone before—a famous physician from Vienna had chanced to pass through Zurich, and had been brought by his father to see him and his mother; the latter being then slowly recovering from the fever that had perilled her life for many weeks. He examined Paul, giving him much pain; but of that he recked little, for there was hope in it. The day following he came again, bringing with him a young French student who was travelling with him. Again Paul went through the same ordeal. But, alas! the physician knew not till too late that the Latin words he exchanged with his youthful companion were only too well understood by the unhappy sufferer. And they took from him his hope,—and taking that, took all.

Seeing the look of anguish on his face, the doctor kindly asked if he had hurt him very much, and sought to cheer him by saying all was over.

“Yes,” the poor boy had replied, “all is over—but life—for hope is over. Having taken that, you may take my life too,

and I will thank you." And as the doctor looked perplexed and alarmed at his bitter words, he added in a voice deep with untold anguish, "It is not your hand, doctor, but your words;" and steadily, with bitter emphasis, he had repeated them.

In vain the doctor endeavoured to soften down the meaning of those words; in vain the young student lingered and whispered that he thought the great man was possibly wrong, cases such as his had been cured at Paris;—what were the words of a beardless youth—well meant, indeed, and kind, Paul owned that—to weigh against the fiat of one on whose head the snows of many winters rested? The arrow had sped, the iron had entered into his soul, and sore, sore was its rankling. Like one of old, he turned his face to the wall and refused to be comforted. All the things that had given a measure of brightness to his blighted life, seemed to have lost their value. A long and severe access of suffering was but the natural consequence of all this. So severe was the attack that it was feared the feeble life would follow the broken hope into the count of things that were. Slowly it spent itself, and a measure of bodily improvement succeeded. But not of mental. The fits of irritation and impatience, alternating with the cheerfulness and quiet endurance which had marked him of old, were exchanged for a spirit of bitter, hopeless repining. All efforts to rouse or soothe him elicited only passionate reproach or restless chafing. The faith and hope he had learned from his mother's gentle lips were crushed down by the daring and impious questioning of God's ways, that had drawn upon him, sufferer as he was, more than one sharp reproof from the lips of the priest he had once loved—reproofs that had but added fuel to the fire. Only his mother's presence could bring any measure of soothing with it. The touch of her soft hand on his burning brow, of her gentle lips to his feverish cheek, or the sweet tones of love in her voice, often brought calm to his weary heart—better, holier feeling to his troubled spirit. In her presence he rarely broke into those paroxysms of irritability that so tried even the gentle, patient

Madeline. No wonder, then, that Madeline had turned from the thought of Paul bereaved of their mother as from a gulf down which it was madness to look.

The departure of his twin-brothers, Max and Friedel, to study at the University of Basle, had further narrowed Paul's circle of interest ; and since the fatal day when his hope of ultimate recovery—or even of death, for it was to a helpless crippled *life* the doctor's words had consigned him—had been crushed, he had refused with quiet consistent bitterness even to look at a book.

Nothing but the irresistible force of those spiritual yearnings which rose above even the strong pleadings of maternal love, could have induced the mother to leave her poor, wayward, suffering boy, whose lot most deemed the only shadow upon her earthly path. With Bertha he was always specially impatient, and indeed she was rarely with him alone. Her mother's delicacy of health, and Paul's constant craving for her presence, had naturally devolved all household cares upon her, and to Madeline fell the task of sharing the mother's attendance upon Paul. But the latter was too young and inexperienced to undertake the management of Paul and the household, and the mother too weak to go alone, so when the pilgrimage to Einsiedeln was decided upon, Paul had to content himself with Bertha's attendance during the three days they were to be absent.

Three long weary days they had been, to nurse and patient. The former was certainly far more efficient and at home among her maidens and stores than in the sick-chamber ; the latter far from disposed to be tolerant of mistakes and omissions, or even of the over great zeal and anxiety of an inexperienced but affectionate nurse. So Paul had chafed himself into a fever of nervous irritability, though he was really in a much less suffering state than he had been for months past ; and poor Bertha was thoroughly weary with the conflict between her usually quick and unrestrained temper, and her earnest, affectionate wish to be all to the invalid her mother and Madeline were.

She sat now, gazing pitifully at her poor brother, as he lay on his tumbled cushions in a position which she knew must be most uncomfortable, longing to set them right, yet knowing no touch but her mother's or Madeline's would gain approval. Perhaps the sufferer's impatience was not wholly uncalled for. The quick comprehension and tender tact of a true nurse, woman's special dower, is certainly far from coming alike to all, and perhaps can scarcely be acquired in all its perfection even by long training and experience. It is a gift rather of the heart than of the hand. Madeline, like her mother, possessed it. Not so Bertha. She wearied the patient by her very endeavours to relieve, worried him by cares all her wishes could not render other than fussy and obtrusive, and provoked him the more by her efforts to comfort and soothe. Well might she anxiously mark the cathedral chimes, and watch the gradual crimsoning of the sun's rays on the distant mountain-peaks, which heralded the closing in of the last day of her unwonted and uncongenial task.

It was the latter from no lack of love and tender pity. It was Bertha's hands that prepared with so much skill and care the numerous little delicacies to tempt the sickly appetite—it was Bertha's thoughtfulness that kept the house so still and quiet on Paul's worst days—it was her foresight that caused the remedies that might be needed in his sudden attacks of acute pain to be always prepared and at hand. No, there was no lack of feeling in Bertha's heart, though its waters ran very, very still; so darkly and so silently, that none perhaps save her mother knew how deeply. People called her cold and reserved, and while everywhere she gathered respect and esteem, none thought of *loving* her—none dreamed how the heart they most erroneously deemed cold yearned for love.

And looking at her grave, passionless face, as she sits watching Paul's restless tossing, fearing to move or speak, lest she should further irritate him, we too might think her cold. She looks more than her twenty-five years; her features are regular

but somewhat harsh in outline, her complexion pale, her hair black and glossy, her eyes full and dark like Paul's, but with a dulled look, as if all their fire had been quenched—strange to see in one yet so young. That, and the lines round the decided mouth, as well as the staid composure of her aspect, made her, as we have said, look older than she really was. Sometimes people said, how unlike her youthful promise Bertha Reinhardt had grown up. They remembered those quiet eyes, bright with life and fun; those pale cheeks round and rosy; those grave lips wreathed with other smiles than they wore now. But that was long ago; the change had come gradually, and no one knew of a wasted love and a blighted trust that had made her womanhood so different from her girlhood.

But saddest and strangest change of all, those who remembered the Bertha of the past said, was from the bright, eager trustfulness of the former, to the cold, sarcastic suspicion of the latter—the dark doubtfulness of all things good and true which shut her from so many sympathies. In her own family she was respected, trusted, and esteemed—but scarcely loved, except, indeed, by her mother. Her trouble had come when all were too young to understand it. The brother and sister next to her had died, and the twins, Max and Friedel, were six years younger than herself. Perhaps it is scarcely true to say she was not loved, but, at anyrate, the affection lay latent, undeveloped. The sense of being misunderstood and unappreciated rested heavily upon her heart, and weighing down all the warm affections that lay unsuspected in its depths, made her appear stern, and cold, and apathetic. When her younger brothers and sisters were yet children, her *help* was always ready with a broken toy, a torn frock, or any trouble or difficulty. But the *help* was given silently, quietly, without *sympathy*. So they grew up to think of their grave, useful, elder sister, as one apart from themselves, little dreaming how that repressed, self-contained nature, longed for the lost power of winning hearts—how bitterly she felt the isolation that they

deemed her own choice and seeking. Perhaps it never struck her that she herself was most to blame ; that those young eager spirits were necessarily damped by her cold, grave ways, and utterly incapable of seeing beneath the quiet surface.

The departure of her eldest brothers had been a great loss to her : the gentle, thoughtful Friedel, understood her better than any of the others ; and Max, warm-hearted, generous Max, was always ready to defend her against any imputations. Both dimly remembered a time when Bertha had been a merry, laughing, high-spirited girl ; and though, by her own request, her trial had been kept secret from them as from the others, Friedel's quick intuition had divined much of its nature, and he influenced Max accordingly. Madeline's timid, sensitive spirit, was too completely subdued by the dread of Bertha's cold and cutting sarcasm to enable her to make any approaches, and her need of sympathy and companionship had hitherto been fully met by her mother. Hans was in a state of chronic rebellion against Bertha's arbitrarily enforced authority ; Clare, gentle, loving Clare, was not to be wholly repelled by the coldness with which her little heart was often chilled, and perhaps Bertha relaxed more to the petted darling of the household than she did to any other human being, her mother excepted.

Slowly, slowly the sun's crimson rays passed up from the invalid's face, and rested higher and higher upon the opposite wall ; then as the cathedral chimes rang out another half-hour gone, Bertha said in a voice which the very effort to render gentle made even more constrained and cold, " Not much longer to wait now, Paul ; they will be here soon after sundown."

" Thou wilt be over glad, Bertha ; it is weary work for thee sitting with thy hands on thy lap, watching me as thou hast done this last hour. The whirl of thy wheel were better than that."

" I did not mean that, Paul," said Bertha ; " it is only for thee I grieve. I know how sore thou longest for the mother and for Madeline, and thou wilt not let me serve thee."

"Thou wouldst serve me better by leaving me alone, than by watching me as a cat does a mouse. Methinks the sight is none so pleasant a one ;" and with a fling of his restless arms he completely dislodged one of his cushions, and it fell to the floor.

Bertha rose and attempted to place it under his head ; but exerting his feeble strength to the utmost, he snatched it from her, flung it violently to the other side of the room, and then sank back with a cry of pain.

"Oh, Paul, Paul ! thou art sorely wilful. What shall I do to please thee ?" said Bertha, with more of bitterness in her tone than she was at all aware of. "Thou canst not lie like that. And it will be a full hour, at the very least, before the mother will be home, and then she will be worn and weary."

"Yes ; she will come back and be ill again. Oh, mother, mother ! why didst thou leave me ?" and the poor boy, exhausted with his fit of passion, burst into tears.

Bertha was softened.

"Thou knowest why, Paul," she said ; "because she thought her prayers there might serve thee more than her presence here."

"Prayers, prayers !" moaned Paul passionately. "I tell thee, Bertha, prayers are but wasted breath. Ay, look shocked as thou wilt, I tell thee so. Have I not proved it ? Have I not lain here, week after week, repeating Aves and Paters and Credos till my lips were dry and my brain swam. Look at those knobs of yonder carving ; by them I counted. The mother ever told me Our Lady had a mother's heart, and had all power with her Son. Once I believed this, Bertha, now I believe it not. Had she a mother's heart, she would have pitied and helped me ; our mother would do aught, bear aught, to save me one pang. They say Mary has healed many such as I. Had she healed me, I would have been vowed to her for life. But she heard not ; or hearing, cared not ; or caring, had no power. So now I tell thee prayers are wasted breath. I, at least, will trouble myself with them no more."

"Paul, Paul, speak not thus. Thy words are as wild as sinful."

"I will speak thus. Why should I not? If my prayers reach not Heaven, thou thinkest my wild words will. Let them. Couldst thou read the thoughts of my heart, thou wouldst think my words might well be passed over. Let Him who made me what I am look to it. Why was I given powers that would win the mastery on many a field, yearnings and aspirations that stir not shallower hearts, and then chained down to this accursed couch"—and he struck it violently with his hand—"to writhe here like a crushed worm, with all that is good and high and noble in me turned to wormwood and gall? I tell thee, Bertha, the pains to which thou ministerest with thy nostrums are as nothing compared with the torment here, and here," he said, laying one hand on his head and one on his heart; "here, in the seething ferment of this maddened brain; here, in the anguish of knowing what I am, what I shall be more and more,—a poor, wretched, pining tyrant, wearing out my angel-mother's very life with my pining and chafing and rebellion against God, and casting early shadows upon poor Madeline's young spirit—sweet, patient Madeline, who never returns one ungentle tone or look to all my thankless petulance and cruel waywardness. Hans shuns my room as he would a pest-house, and well he may. Clare's sunny eyes know tears chiefly through me. Max and Friedel went forth with bitter words as my farewell greeting, because they went to drink at the fountain open to all but me, while I lie here—lie here chained not only to this couch, this miserable crippled body, but to this hateful, loathsome self. 'Control it,' thou saidst to-day. Little thou knowest! Tell the wretch chained to the wild horse's back to stop its mad career. If he can, then may I. Faith, patience, manliness, where are they? All died when my hope died. Why did you not let me die then? Old Lisig said you helped to save me, Bertha. Bertha, why did you not let me die?"

He ceased, exhausted and choking with emotion. Perhaps never before had he spoken thus fully of his inner struggles. Low, bitter words, dropped now and then, deep depression, sullen apathy, passionate petulance, and resolute steeling of his heart against all softening and brightening influences, were the things that wrung the gentle, loving hearts, of those who ordinarily ministered to him, but he rarely gave full vent to his feelings in words; he would scarcely have uttered these in his mother's presence or Madeline's. But his spirit, chafed to the uttermost by their absence and by poor Bertha's unskilled nursing, had burst all control, and made him lay bare its guarded secrets to one whom he would least of all have chosen for a confidante.

"Paul, Paul, thou art beside thyself," she said. "Think, art thou ready for the death of which thou speakest? And is it not better to suffer here than beyond it?"

"Why should it be? Did not Father Gualtier tell me even last week all this misery availed *me* nothing, though it might be saving grace to some. Because I bore it not meekly. *Meekly*, with my heart all fire! No, it avails nothing; and if death ends it not for me, it will for others. The priests will tell you that the God who has no mercy, no pity for me *now*, will relent when you give money, and they say masses for my soul. And in time you would learn to think of me as at rest. Of *me* at rest, at rest, at rest." There was something terrible in the bitter mournfulness with which the last words were spoken—faintly, gaspingly.

"Paul, dear Paul, do compose thyself. Oh! do let me try to put thy cushions right; indeed, indeed thou must not talk more."

"Yes; put them, put them;" then as she did so timidly and somewhat awkwardly with painful care, he said, "Thou hast had sorry thanks, Bertha, for all thy pains. Thank thy saints thou hast the house, not me, for thy burden. Thou wilt forget, when thou art back with thy maids and stores once more,

all I have said. Repeat it not to the mother or to Madeline ; they have their share. And it will not hurt thee."

"No," she replied bitterly ; "thou thinkest nothing will touch *me*—that I have no heart, no feeling."

"Thou hast too much to be with a wretch like me. I have used thee shamefully, Bertha, as I do all who come near—even the mother. But the fault has been mine, not thine. I know that full well ; and it is no healing balm. No," he said, flinging aside the hand she laid on his burning brow, and turning away his flushed face, "I am not penitent, not softened, not *meek*. Think it not. The fire in my heart burns still, and will scorch thee still if thou stayest. Leave me, leave me now, if thou wouldst have me rest. Thou canst not understand—then believe. I would be alone."

And Bertha was obliged to leave him, hoping exhaustion might induce a sleep which would last till his mother returned. Throwing a light coverlet over him—which, however, was pettishly dashed away—and closing the window, she left the room, the door of which opened into the usual living-room of the family ; or rather the two doors, for an outer one, thickly covered with crimson cloth, had been arranged outside to shut out all household sounds from Paul's ears at such times as he should not be able to bear them.

CHAPTER VI.

GEROLD VON KNONAU.

"The reconciling grave
Swallows distinction first, that made us foes."—SOUTHERN.



THE large room Bertha entered was empty and silent, the spinning-wheels at the opposite end were standing idle. Paul had imagined he could detect their whirl even through the closed doors, and Bertha had sent the maidens away. The room was long and low, occupying the entire centre of the house—one large window looked into the street, two others into the garden at the back. A large carved table stood in the centre, with benches of the same dark polished wood on each side. One end of the room was occupied by one of the enormous stoves of brown glazed earthenware then common in Switzerland; so large that they served also as a storehouse for fuel, and in some cases as a bedstead by night. On one side was a carved settle, on the other a heavy arm-chair, also of polished carved wood, with crimson cushions and high straight back; this was the place of the master of the house. In one window was a small table, bearing a work-basket, one or two books, and a vase of flowers. and beside it a smaller and more comfortably-cushioned chair. Several other massive chairs, one or two stools, and in a recess at the further end a carved sideboard, on which were displayed some handsome silver cups and other articles, completed the furniture.

Bertha went up to one of the windows, through which the last crimson rays of the sun were streaming; and resting her elbows on the sill, leaned her face upon her hands with a deep, weary sigh. "Poor boy, poor boy!" she murmured half aloud. "And he thinks I cannot understand! He thinks, like all the rest, that I care for nothing beyond sauces and preserves, and pickles and linen. 'Thou dost not know, Bertha,' he said, 'thou canst not understand.' O Paul! it is *thou* that dost not know, *thou* that dost not understand. Thou and all. The fire of the heart that burns till only ashes are left, and still smoulders on even then! The passionate struggle against the inevitable; the weary burden of a spoiled, blighted life; the fierce rebellion against the God who lets such things be; the gnawing doubt; and, worse than all, the bitter loathing contempt for a changed, lost self! Ah, Paul! little thou thinkest how well I know them all. Thy words might wake tender, saintly pity in the dear mother's pure spirit,—draw loving, wondering tears from Madeline's gentle eyes,—but they could arouse no *sympathy*, bid no answering chords thrill and vibrate, as in mine. But what matters it? I could not help thee didst thou know, and the knowledge of another's pain is no healing balsam for one's own. And to thee will come, one day, the dull, dumb acquiescence which time brings. But oh! that something, some one, could bring thee that which should save *thee* at least thy nobleness, thy beauty of soul and spirit—thyself to thyself. If *that* indeed is to be found in earth or—in heaven." The last words were muttered low, like the distant echo of some deep haunting voice within, and again her face sank upon her hands.

Lost in troubled thoughts, or it may be mournful memories she did not notice the opening of the outer door and the entrance of a handsome, bright-looking lad of some twelve or fourteen years. He stood an instant as if bewildered by the unusual stillness and emptiness of the room, which was generally occupied by some of the family. Then seeing Bertha's motionless figure, a look of alarm passed over his fine expressive

features, and crossing quickly to her side, he laid his hand on her arm, saying, "Bertha, what is this? where is everybody?" Then as he saw her face wet with tears, "O Bertha! what is wrong—Paul—the mother?"

"Nothing wrong, Gerold, really—only Paul has been so restless and wretched this evening; and for the matter of that, ever since they went. I could do nothing to please him."

"Since who went, Bertha?"

"The mother and Madeline. Didst thou not know that they went the day before yesterday to the Feast of the Consecration?"

"To Einsiedeln, Bertha!—the mother! Why, it will go near to kill her; it is a long, weary journey—and for the matter of that, a long weary round of duties there too. But the father, how came he to suffer it? I fear me it will be the worse for her."

"She was bent on going; thou knowest her piety, Gerold, and thou knowest too the greater the saint, the greater the sorrow. She, who is all but such in very deed, is ever bewailing her sins, and she thinks nothing too great a toil for her soul's sake."

"And Herr Reinhardt went with her, of course?"

"Yes; and Hans and Clare; Madeline too. Thank Heaven, they will be back to-night. But where hast thou been this week past, Gerold? I have so longed for thee or thy mother these days. For thee specially. Paul is always content to see thee."

"I have been at Knonau. My grandfather sent for me. Thou knowest he is failing in health, and takes sick and sudden fancies. I am only now returned, and came at once with these for Paul. Our little Lena has been sick, and mother has been kept at home. So we knew nought of this. May I go in to Paul? These grapes will refresh him. See, are they not fine ones! I gathered them myself last evening, and picked the finest, trust me."

"I doubt thee not, Gerold; I think thou art one that will

always strive after the best, and get it too. But go in softly, he may be asleep. He has worn himself out, and will not suffer me to watch him longer. If thou canst stay till they get home, I shall be glad."

Bertha was not at all singular in her opinion that Gerold Meyer von Knonau would indeed not only strive after the best, but get it too. Great things were predicted of his future. Alas for the vanity of the best-based human predictions! No horoscope showed a noble youthful form lying mangled in its grace and beauty on a red disastrous field—a field than which no sadder was ever fought—from which the bitter fruit of glory was not gathered even by the victors.

It was thought his noble blood and burgher training, combined with his unusual natural endowments of mind and body, would make him great in the new day that was breaking over Europe. A romantic and touching incident, whose results would colour his whole future life, had occurred through Gerold's gift of unusual personal beauty. His father, John Meyer von Knonau, the heir of a noble family, so far forgot his birth and training as to prefer beauty, modesty, and virtue to worldly advantage, true love to family interest. He met and loved Anna Reinhardt, a lovely and virtuous girl of Zurich, distantly related to the Reinhardts of our story, therefore of burgher family. Long and earnestly, but vainly, he sought to obtain his father's consent to his marriage with her whom he so passionately loved, whose character, still more than her beauty, would have made a worthy ornament of a prouder castle than that of Knonau. The father was inexorable, and nothing remained to the unhappy lover but separation from his first and only love, or alienation from his father and family. Perhaps hoping that the latter would relent, they married. The angry father at once disinherited the son who had presumed to disobey his commands—a less common offence in those days, evil as they were, than, alas! it is in our own—though he loved him tenderly. No entreaties could alter his determination; he

steadfastly refused to see or even receive any communication from his disobedient son.

And that son died—died in the prime of his youth, unforgiven, unreconciled to the father whose pride, and harshness, and disbelief in the depth and power of true, holy love, had forced him into a step, culpable, indeed, yet surely not unpardonably so. A heavier crime had been deemed a lighter one, perchance. The sad widow devoted herself to the education of her poor orphan children, a boy and two girls. What the father felt when the grave had closed between him and the youth whose life he had blighted, none knew; some said he had refused even to listen to his earnest pleadings for a word of pardon ere he died. However that may be, it is certain no parting interview took place. From the day he drove him from his presence with cruel mockery and threats, he saw his face no more. If grief he felt, it was only shown in added sternness; and having made a last vain appeal to him for his son's orphan children, Anna gave up all thoughts of her boy ever obtaining his father's inheritance, and sought to train him, as few were better capable of doing, for taking his part in her own lowlier station.

But one day, when the grass was growing green on John Meyer's lowly grave, his father chanced to be standing at a window near the fish-market of Zurich, when his attention was caught by a lovely boy of about three years old in the arms of a maid-servant, who was buying fish at a stall. The child's remarkable beauty and sprightliness aroused long slumbering echoes in old Meyer's obdurate heart; perhaps he thought of a time when such a child's sunny head had been pillowed on his breast, when such round, chubby arms had been clasped round his neck, such radiant eyes flashed laughter into his own, such lips pressed balmy kisses on his cheek. And perhaps with these thoughts came others—of a low, unhonoured grave, in which that head rested now, the bright hair unstreaked by the first hoar of summer frost; in which those clasping arms lay

powerless ere their manhood's prime ; those eyes, from whose mournful pleadings he had turned so coldly away, were sealed in the last long sleep ; those lips, whose first lisping words had been such music, silenced for ever. "Father!" Did that word fall once more on his spirit's ear? and did his heart answer, "My son, my son"? This we know not, except as we judge there is fire where there is smoke—an opened spring where the once sear grass grows fresh and green.

Earnestly, silently, he gazed till the fair boy was borne away, then pointing after him, asked whose was that beautiful child.

"It is your son's child," was the answer.

It was enough. All that present could do in atonement for the past, the old man did. The words that unlocked his heart opened his arms too. They infolded his grandchildren and their mother, whose worth he had learned all too late. But that was all. His son was gone—gone where no earthly embrace could reach him—no late-wrung forgiveness revive his bruised spirit. Bitter was the old man's remorse, wild his un-availing regrets, and he strove to make up in tenderness to the living his harshness to the dead. Particularly his heart clung to the boy whose bright childish beauty had first softened his iron will. Anna remained in Zurich with her children; the fair promise of Gerold's lovely infancy was amply borne out by his boyhood; and the careful training of his pious and sensible mother already bore rich fruit. The latter was still distinguished by the grace and beauty her boy inherited, and still more for her virtues. In spite of the disparity of age, a warm friendship existed between her and Marguerite Reinhardt, perhaps all the more real and lasting because their characters were so opposite, while their tastes were similar. Marguerite was gentle, loving, timid, sensitive to a morbid degree, and reserved except to those she entirely loved and trusted; Anna, gentle, but with the gentleness of strength—firm and decided, with deep, strong affections, and clear, shrewd sense—pious, but

rejecting much of the hollow form and superstition of the time, plucking out the solid and the true from the mass of rubbish and ruin which encumbered all that was then taught as the Christian faith. Such a friend could scarce fail to be a stay and comfort to the soft and yielding Marguerite.

During the long illness, the year before our story opens, when the gates of death had yawned before her shrinking sight, Marguerite had been saved from despair by Anna's strong sense of God's mercy and goodness, by her firm conviction that He who made the heart knew it better than priest or pope, and knowing it better, judged it also more tenderly. A blind trust, an unenlightened faith ; but He who does not despise "the day of small things" would surely not despise it. Nothing but a look at the brazen serpent could save the bitten Israelite ; but would not the look save if the pole and its emblem loomed but dimly and mistily through the deep gloom of a wild and cloudy night ? Surely so. Oh, many an eye, even in the midnight gloom of the Dark Ages, doubtless caught gleams of Christ far off and dim, like peeps of night sky, with here and there a star, through the thick massive branches of a dark pine-forest. For "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And it was no midnight gloom then, but the gray dawn of a coming day.

Gerold sat watching Paul's troubled sleep while the twilight shadows gathered round. At last Paul woke suddenly. In the dim light he was only conscious that it was not Bertha's face that bent over him, and exclaimed, "Mother !" in a tone of such eager joy that Gerold grieved to have called it forth in vain. "No, Paul, it is only I," he said. "I came in when thou wert asleep."

"It would have served me better hadst thou come when I was waking. But, doubtless, I am better company sleeping," said Paul bitterly. "I thought thou hadst done well, and taken me at my word, when I bade thee stay away in future."

"No, Paul; how couldst thou think so?" Gerold answered, taking the invalid's thin, hot hand in his. "I have been at Knonau these five days past; my grandfather sent old Gilbert to fetch me thither, and I had no time to bid thee farewell. And I knew not till Bertha told me just now that thou wert so lonely. It has been a sore time for thee, I fear."

"It matters not," said Paul wearily; "one drop of gall more or less makes little difference."

"Nay, Paul, one drop the more makes the brimming cup overflow; and I know how thou wouldst pine for thy mother and thy sweet Madeline. But thou wilt have them back to-night."

"Maybe, and maybe not. My mother would stay a month did the priests persuade her it was good for her soul."

"Scarcely, and leave thee, Paul. Scarcely for her own soul's sake even would she have left thee. It was as much for thy good as her own she went—perhaps more. How many of her prayers would be for thee?"

"I know not, and I care not. Gerold, I tell thee, one touch of my mother's hand upon this throbbing brow—one look of love from her soft, holy eyes—one tone from her low, sweet voice, does me more good than a thousand prayers. For they do me none—none—none! She is all that stands between me and—I know not what. Without her I must go mad, or worse. She is the only link left between me as I am, and me as I might have been. These three days have taught me what life would be without her. I laughed when Father Gualtier spoke to me of purgatory. I thought nothing could be worse for me than it was already. But I was wrong, for my mother would not be there. O mother, mother!"

The low, tremulous tones, quivering with bitter earnestness, ceased, but Gerold answered not. A cold chill fell upon his young, generous heart, as he recalled words heard, scarce a week before, in his mother's house, and some of them from his mother's lips. They rang through his mind like a funeral dirge.

For the change in the fragile mother of the Reinhardt family was unmarked only in her own household. If affection's eyes are sometimes keen, they are often blinded—perhaps mercifully so. And those words pointed to failing strength, and an opened grave, and a bereaved home,—to a life-cord worn so thin that the last frail strand must ere long be severed.

Gerold's silence displeased Paul, and he said peevishly, "Hast thou left thy tongue and thy wits behind thee at Knonau, Gerold, that thou sittest thus? Thou art wont to talk over fast."

Gerold started, and at once falling into Paul's mood, began to speak of his visit to Knonau, of the slight illness of his little sister Lena, which had kept his mother closely tied at home, and of other matters.

At the sound of the deep bell of the cathedral he started up. The hour was later than he thought. "I must hasten home now, Paul," he said; "I have much work to do."

Paul looked earnestly into the boy's kindling face, on which the rays of a small lamp Bertha had brought in while they talked fell directly, and sighed. But he only said: "It was a good day for Zurich when Oswald Myconius came, Gerold—and for thee."

"It was indeed," the boy answered. "O Paul, would that thou didst know him! He is so gentle and kind, and withal so firm and wise. The wildest boys and most unruly youths obey him and fear him, because they love him. He would please thee in one thing, Paul," he added, smiling: "he thinks all truth and light is not shut up with the Pope and priests. For that reason Father Gaultier likes him not, as thou knowest. He maintains that the Holy Scriptures are the only true source of light and wisdom; and that if priests or bishops, or even the Pope himself, command or teach anything contrary to them, it is not according to God, for he speaks in them and through them alone. And he says all men should be able to read them for themselves—that God has given them for all. And my

mother thinks he is right ; I think so too. And oh, Paul, I do think a time is at hand when light and truth will prevail, when men's minds will burst the chains that bind them so closely. Master Myconius says the Greek and Hebrew languages are golden keys that will unlock treasures of wisdom and knowledge which will one day be open to all. And he says it is a noble thing to be of the first to enter the long-closed portals of classical and inspired literature. And to think that those keys may be received by all now ! It makes me glad to have been born in this morning-time—a time in which each life may be noble, for the Truth needs champions in all ranks." The boy's slight frame was raised to its greatest height, his eye flashed, his cheeks glowed, his breast heaved ; and in the enthusiasm of the moment he forgot that Paul could scarce hear him speak thus unmoved.

But as his bright glance fell upon the latter's wan face, with its set lips and contracted brow, and eyes that glowed with angry fire, he murmured, " O Paul, I am so sorry ! forgive me."

Paul gave no answer ; and Gerold added, as if struck by a sudden thought, " They will hear Ulric Zwingle preach at Einsiedeln."

" Well, what of that ?" said Paul shortly.

" I scarcely know. People say his sermons are wonderful, and that he preaches a new gospel. Not the gospel of the priests, but of the Holy Scriptures, and that he proves all he says therefrom. Some say he is a heretic, following in the steps of a monk named Luther, who is beginning to make a great stir in Germany by his opposition to the priests and their teachings. Others think he is but a preacher of old truths long lost sight of. Master Myconius loves him well, and thinks Switzerland holds not his equal. They say many who have heard him have found great grace and peace in his words. There was one old man, whom my mother nursed through a long illness in his garret room in the next street to ours. As soon as he was able to crawl, he went on a pilgrimage to Einsiedeln. He had been

a wicked man, and his sins weighed heavily upon his soul. He was long away, and came back only to lie down and die. I went with my mother to carry him some food.

"My mother asked him, had he made his peace with God? and he answered, 'No; but I have gone to Ulric Zwingle's Christ, and he has pardoned all my sins. He died for me; he loves me, and God loves him, and for his sake will not punish me.'

"My mother thought he was crazed at first, and perhaps he was so in part; but not wholly, I am sure. Only, we could not convince him that the Christ that Ulric Zwingle preached was the Christ of the Church.

"'No, no,' he said; 'that Christ is a dreadful Judge, who will hardly pardon a rich man for much money and many prayers—hardly listen even to his own Blessed Mother and the holy saints, much less to a poor, wretched, sinful old man like me. But the Christ Ulric Zwingle preached about is quite different. Ah! I cannot tell you what he said about him. I am a poor ignorant man, and have not words like him; but it is all written here,'—and he laid his hand upon his heart. 'Oh, he is good, and beautiful, and true! I see him in my dreams, and he smiles, and says, "Come, come." Yes; "Come unto ME"—these were the words—"Come unto Me." They melted my hard heart, and filled it with love and peace. I feared the priest's Christ; but this Christ is stronger than he. He "has all power in heaven"—more even than the Blessed Virgin herself—and will get me entrance there. The priest's Christ loves *saints*, but this Christ loves *sinners*, even such as I.' And when at the last the priest came to give him the last rites of the Church, he still said, 'I do not want *your* Christ: Ulric Zwingle's Christ is the one for me. He loves sinners—he loves me; I am safe, I am happy.' So he continued to the end. The priest was very angry, and said that was what came of preaching the Holy Scriptures to ignorant people, and that it was the devil's work. But my mother said it was more like the work of the good God.

And the light that shone on that rough, worn, rugged face, seemed indeed to be of heaven.

"And, Paul, since I have begun to read a little Greek, I have more than once read a few chapters in Master Myconius's Greek Testament ; and from them I think that poor, old, half-crazed man was right : that Ulric Zwingle's Christ is God's Christ and the Bible's Christ. Paul, this truth is worth finding out. Oh, would that thou couldst be persuaded to go on with thy Greek ! But now I must go. Shall I call Bertha ?"

"No ; I am best alone," said Paul wearily ; and after an affectionate farewell, Gerold left, and only calling "Good-night" to Bertha as he hurried through the house-room, set off at a rapid run down the street.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THE MORROW BROUGHT.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."
PROVERBS xxvii. 1.



ABOUT an hour after Gerold had left him, Paul awoke from sleep to meet his mother's eyes. At once, and silently, he raised himself from his pillows, twined his arms round her neck, and laid his head upon her breast with a fulness of content and rest, like that of a weary, passion-exhausted child, who has found at last the refuge and shelter it sought.

Her gentle arms infolded him. Once more loving lips were pressed again and again to his pale brow; but after the first murmured words, "My Paul; my poor, poor boy," neither spoke. Full hearts have few words.

The father entered, bearing in little Clare, prepared for bed, with blue eyes held very wide open, lest sleep should seal them ere she should kiss poor brother Paul. Perhaps Paul felt he erred in cherishing his bitter murmuring spirit, when those soft small arms were round his neck, the rosy lips pressed to his own, the sweet sleepy voice uttered fond words of loving greeting; when his stern, silent father, inquired with kind solicitude as to how he had fared the last lonely days; when Madeline's soft, speaking eyes, told him so much of tender comprehension of, and sympathy with, all that concerned him. At any rate, his gloom and irritability had disappeared for the time. He

cheerfully answered all questions, and even praised Bertha's care and kindness; and when little Clare was taken away, he begged his mother at once to seek the refreshment and rest she needed. "Thou dost not look tired, mother dear," he said, gazing wonderingly into the dear face that bent over him. "Thine eyes are bright, and thy cheek quite glowing. The mountain air has done thee good. But thou must be weary, and I will not keep thee. It is enough to know that thou art in the house; that I shall wake in the night and know it; that to-morrow I shall have thee again."

But it seemed as though neither could bear to relax that close embrace; and it was not till Herr Reinhardt's voice had peremptorily called the mother to partake of the meal that Bertha had prepared, that Paul's arms unloosed their hold. It was past his usual hour for retiring, but he pleaded to remain where he was till Madeline had finished her supper, and lay looking through the open door into the house-room where his mother sat, just where the light of the lamp fell full upon her face.

And his was not the only gaze that rested wonderingly upon it that night. The maidens whispered to one another that the mistress was strangely altered. Surely the visit to the sacred shrine of the miracle-working image of Our Lady of Einsiedeln had not been in vain. She looked so young, so fresh and bright. Her soft eyes beamed with a starry light, a delicate flush of rose tinted her cheek, sweet smiles played round her lips; her voice was clear, and its low tones seemed thrilling with the echoes of some deep, inward music. She scarcely appeared fatigued, and there was a play of happy, easy cheerfulness in the few words she spoke, which yet was not gaiety, but drawn from some deeper source. Herr Reinhardt looked at her and thought of the days in which he had first seen her, even more than of those when the pensive sweetness of her face first graced his board and hearth. Bertha, who had expected her mother to return utterly prostrated with fatigue, regarded

her altered looks and manner with wonder, not unmixed with anxiety.

But Madeline's young heart swelled high with glad relief ; looking at her mother, how could she but deem the terrible fear of the past night a thing lost and gone ?

Very pleasant it was to Paul to have her sweet face, and light step, and gentle touch, to minister to him once more. Very pleasant to have each thing put in its accustomed place, each little service rendered just at the right time, in the right way, and so quietly and unobtrusively that he was scarcely conscious how much was done for him—how really helpless he was. At least, he had not been so previously ; but the three days in which Bertha's want of skill and comprehension had so heavily tried his long unused stock of forbearance, had opened his eyes ; and Madeline was deeply touched by the unusually gentle and grateful manner with which he received her aid. " Ah, Madeline," he said, " I am a poor creature with thee, but I am still worse without thee. Yet it is hard thy bright youth should be wasted thus."

" Wasted, Paul ! how could it be better spent ? And what better meed could I have than knowing I can be a little help to thee ?" He smiled sadly, and drew her down for a kiss. " Now, I must go to the mother, dear Paul ; it is time she went to rest. She will come to thee to say good-night ; but thou wilt not keep her."

" No ; but, Madeline, how bright she looks ! I have not seen her look so well for years ! Ah !" with a recurrence of the old bitterness, " she has had three days of peace—three days without my whims and pains and murmurs. Madeline, it is I that am wearing her thus."

" Dear Paul—no—do not think so. Thy pain and trial must be hers too, but it is no fault of thine." Then, wishing to divert his thoughts, she said : " That strange brightness of look and manner has been hers all day. Paul, she has found wondrous help in the words of the preacher at Einsiedeln, Ulrich

Zwingle. After the journey thither, she was spent and faint, but since she heard that sermon, she has been as thou seest her. I do think those words have given her new life."

"What words?"

"I cannot tell thee, Paul; they seemed to me like a mighty strain of unknown music."

As she spoke these words the mother herself reëntered the room. Paul gazed searchingly into her face as she bent low over him. "Thou lookest as if it were well with thee, mother," he said.

"And it is well with me, Paul," she answered, with a glad, sweet look of utter content. "O Paul! oh, my boy! would that it were as well with thee. Would that the voice that spoke to my heart yesterday might speak to thine, and the same words—Love, Pardon, Peace." Slowly, with lingering utterance, as though dwelling on newly-found sweetness and depth and meaning in each familiar word, she repeated the last three. All day her heart had seemed too full for speech, as if the new joy had filled it to overflowing.

"Thou hast heard the preacher of whom Gerold spoke this evening, Ulric Zwingle. And his words have moved thee thus," said Paul, a flash of comprehension darting across his mind.

"It was Ulric Zwingle that preached, Paul; but a greater than he spoke the words that have brought peace to my heart—the Lord Christ himself. O Paul! my poor, suffering Paul! would thou couldst hear it too. It would give thee a light which would make all clear to thee—thy pain, thy stricken, blighted life, thy withered hopes. We have been blind, Paul,—thou and I, till now. We have thought the hand that smote thee one of wrath and judgment. Has it not been so? But it has been one of love—love unspeakable, incomprehensible. Now I know it; one day thou wilt too. For, O Paul! God is love, and loves *thee*. To-morrow I will tell thee more," she added, as her father's peremptory voice was heard, bidding her

come to rest at once. "Now, I must leave thee. Good-night, my own dear boy."

"Good-night, sweet mother," Paul said as he passionately returned her fond embrace ; and then he murmured, in the deep, low tones, that come from the heart's inmost recesses, "Mother, mother, thou wilt never leave me more !"

"Never, my Paul, never !" she answered ; "never again, till the dear Lord call me hence." And with another fervent kiss upon his brow, and softly whispered blessing, she left the room.

It was long ere Paul slept that night, long after Madeline had gone to her usual place in the little room, or rather closet within his own, from which his first call never failed to bring her. Long hours of wakefulness were, indeed, but his ordinary nightly portion, when his poor body was wrung with pain, his spirit tortured with vain and hopeless repinings and yearnings. But that night softer and holier feelings were at work, a new-born hope struggled faintly in his breast, a hope that whispered of light and rest that might come to him—even to him. What that light was, or how it was to come to him, he knew not ; but, like a sweet refrain, his mother's last words, "God is love, and loves *thee*," floated through his mind. And almost he marvelled that while the pure deep love of that precious mother was left to him, he could have been so wholly unthankful, and deemed his life so complete a blank. Bitterly he reproached himself for his past waywardness, for his selfish yielding to the gloom and depression that had made his trial cast a shadow over the whole household ; and strongly he resolved that with the morrow he would begin a fresh leaf in his life's book, and be as strong in endurance, and as brave in patience, as he had hitherto been weak and cowardly. He would rise above his lot, not sink beneath it. His high, generous spirit, rose exultingly once more, and in the fervour of that hour he doubted not all he purposed lay in his own power. On the morrow he resolved to ask that his books might be brought to him, and rejoiced to think of the pleasure it would give his mother and

Madeline to see him rouse himself from the languid, often sullen apathy, that had been so grievous to their loving hearts.

So Paul pondered and resolved in the hushed midnight, and longed for the morrow. Ah! that morrow! O Paul, Paul! it was only midnight with thee, and thou thoughtest daybreak at hand. Thou didst not know that the longest, heaviest, darkest hour is that which precedes the dawn. The day would indeed break for thee, and the light dawn upon thee—a better day and a brighter light than thou hadst ever dreamed of—but its time was not yet.

The morrow came—the morrow to which Paul and his mother looked so hopefully. The one, to tell glad news of great joy, of a lost burden and a found Saviour, of a mighty love and a free salvation, that should bring rest and peace to the young blighted life, even as it had to her own worn, weary heart; the other, to shake off the old habits of fretfulness and gloom and repining, to gather the pale blossoms of love that grew so lavishly in the deep shade of his darkened pathway, and to seek to forget in their fragrance that high above his reach, above the gloom, in the free sunshine, hung the proud wreaths of laurel and bay his fettered hands might never win.

The morrow came, with the glad sunbeams kissing sleepers' brows and wakening them to the fair earth's morning smile; with the blue waters and green shores of the shining lake bathed in liquid gold; with the distant peaks of the everlasting hills gleaming with rosy radiance against a sky of cloudless azure; verdant meadows, and hoary rocks, and stately towers, and humble roof-trees flooded with living light; steps and voices among the vineyards, the hum of life in the city streets, glad greetings in castle and cottage, light and life and beauty everywhere.

No, not everywhere. Never that since the serpent's slime was marked on Eden's bowers. Nature smiles on while human hearts are breaking. To how many sealed eyes came that morning's sunshine in vain: on how many brows did it fall

unfelt, unmarked ; to how many hearts did its glad beauty strike as mockery ; from how many homes was it shut out, as it was from the stricken one in the large old house in the High Street of Zurich !

The morrow had come, the morrow to which Paul and his mother looked : to the one, it brought such a waking as ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive ; to the other, what heart may feel, but what language may not express,—agony before which the tongue grows dumb, the pen falls powerless.

Among the sleepers who would wake never more to earth's sunshine and shadows, was Marguerite Reinhardt. In the deep night stillness the call had come which none may disobey. None heard the solemn summons, none marked the spirit's flight ; but when the golden morning came, it revealed a form still and white and cold, with an awful weight of rest upon the marble brow and on the sweet placid features.

Yes ; she was what we call dead, but what God calls asleep,—asleep in Jesus. The deceitful flush of apparently new life and strength had been but the last swift flare of the expiring life-lamp. It was quenched, and with it the light of that desolated home. Over the anguish of that day, and of those that followed, a veil rests, within whose sacred folds none may enter but those who have been enshrouded in the like.

CHAPTER VIII.

RAYMOND'S PROPHECY.

"To fear the worst, oft cures the worst."—SHAKESPEARE.



THOU here, Raymond? I thought thou hadst gone with the hunt."

The speaker was the Lady Ermengarde von Ohrendorf; the occasion of her words, the entrance of a noble-looking youth of about nineteen years into the large tapestried apartment in which she sat with her maidens.

"Even so, mother mine," was the reply, as the youth flung himself down on a low stool at her feet. "Methinks I deserve some small credit for self-denial. I waited but to see the sport commence, and then rode back. It promised to be a brave day, too. Already two bears were slain in their den near the mouth of the Holderbank Pass, and the peasants told of wolves that lurked in the pine-forest beyond. There was a goodly company: the old Count Hagenbuch, and the Baron of Bargaen, with his ward, Count Guy de Montmédi, and a host whose names I knew not."

"And thou didst turn thy back on all this, Raymond, for thy mother's sake?" said the lady, fondly stroking back the glossy locks from the youth's fine open brow.

"They will scarce return before midnight, and ere daybreak I must be gone."

"So early, Raymond ! and wherefore ?"

"So my father orders it ; I asked not wherefore. And, mother, I have something I would say to thee ere I go. Let me take thee into yon recess. I have that to say that is for thine ear alone."

The lady rose and accompanied her son to a recess which formed almost a separate room at one end of the large apartment. "And to-morrow thou wilt be gone, Raymond ? Would that thou couldst be content as thy fathers were ! What a knight needs with learning, I cannot tell. One hand can scarce master pen and sword," she said querulously, as her son settled her comfortably on the broad cushioned window-seat.

"That neither need hinder the other, the lists of Bienne will tell thee, mother," said Raymond, a flush rising to his cheek.

"Where thou didst so nobly, my boy," she answered, gazing proudly up into his face. "Ah ! that was a proud day, Raymond, in which thou didst show thyself worthy of thy De Couci blood. Did not thy kinsman the Marquis himself say so ? and there were no higher praise than that. But wherefore thou shouldst seek to fill thy head with a scholar's fidgets, while thy good steed stands idle in the stable, and thy sword hangs rusting on the wall, is a riddle to me. Thy grandfather would have scorned thee, Raymond."

"Mother," broke forth the youth indignantly, "I will merit no man's scorn. Dost thou not know that a new day is beginning to break over the world ? A time is at hand when it will add to no man's knightly fame to be as ignorant as the boor that herds his swine. Trust me, I will never disgrace the blood of De Couci and Von Ohrendorf. And methinks I have scarce merited thy distrust."

"Now I have vexed thee, Raymond. Merit distrust ! No ! thou art my proudest trust. And, as thou sayest, the good old quiet days are passing, and all is new and restless and changing. Thou must forgive me. For camp or field I might better bear to part with thee ; but to sit brooding over books with

priests and schoolmen!—thou, a free Count of Neufchâtel, and Baron of the Empire!”

Raymond answered not, but stood in silence gazing on the noble view that stretched before the window; and gradually the flush of annoyance faded from cheek and brow, and his eye grew calm and full of thought.

His mother looked up at him with admiring affection. And he was a son of whom a mother might well be proud. The slight, graceful frame, had still the unformed look of unfinished growth; but the muscular development of the chest, the graceful poise of the head, the easy, supple movements of the finely-formed limbs, had none of the awkwardness so often visible in a growing youth. He was really scarcely above the middle height, but looked much more, from the slimness of his figure, and erect and dignified bearing. His features were open, frank, and manly, rather than handsome; his dark glossy hair fell back from a broad, thoughtful brow; his eyes—De Couci eyes—his mother's special pride—deep, dark, Provençal eyes, full of light and fire, mirroring at times the deepest tenderness, shadowed at others with earnest thought—looked out from beneath clear straight brows; and his dark green hunting-dress, with its silver trimmings, became him well.

But presently she resumed, querulously,—“I cannot think where Muriel and you get your taste for books. Instead of broidering and tapestry-work, Muriel is ever reading, or writing, or dreaming. And thou—I will not scold thee again—but with thy scholarship and Muriel's saintliness, I am hardly bested.”

“Where is Muriel, mother?” asked Raymond quickly, and with sudden gravity of eye and voice.

“Nay, ask me not. On the battlements with a book, or in the chapel with a penance, or writing in her room.”

“Mother, it is of her I wish to speak ere she comes. If thou dost not take heed, the fairest flower in all Neufchâtel will be wasting its bloom within the walls of some musty convent ere long.”

"Thou meanest it not, Raymond!" the mother exclaimed, startled from her languid attitude; but then, sinking back—"No, no; there is no danger—her father would never consent."

"But, mother, dost thou never think whitherto all this is tending,—all these prayers and penances—all these pilgrimages and offerings—all these fastings and midnight vigils—all these broodings over saintly records?"

"A maiden's fancy, Raymond."

"Nay, mother, but a *life* fancy. She has been ever thus; but the thing grows upon her of late."

"Hast thou reasoned with her, Raymond? She heeds thee."

"I have spoken with her, mother; but she always forces me to give her the right in her arguments: she is so meek and pious, and always makes me ashamed of my own. But if half Ulrich von Hütten says of convents be true, I would rather see our pure, saintly Muriel, laid in her grave, than immured in one of them."

"Ah! there it is, Raymond. It was an evil day that Ulrich von Hütten passed our castle gates. It was he that filled thy head with all these wild dreams of altering things that have held their ground for ages. I shudder now to remember things that knightly schoolman said. Thou wouldst have been content with thy good horse and sword, as thy fathers have been, had he not poured his own strange fancies into thy young mind."

But Raymond had no wish to resume the discussion that had long been worn threadbare of reason or argument—on his side, at least; on his mother's there was neither from the first, only instinct and feeling, and the prejudice of a naturally weak mind, intensified by habit and opposition. "Well, mother," he answered, "leaving all Ulrich's opinions out of the question, it is certainly neither thy wish nor my father's intention that our sweet Muriel should leave us, to take the nun's veil; and unless something be done, I fear thou wilt find her bent upon it."

"Does she say so?"

"No, mother ; and perhaps I have rather shrunk from leading her to express such an idea in words, and she is not one to speak much of her own deep feelings. Father Joseph agrees with me that her ways and tastes are already more those of a nun than of a noble maiden."

"But suppose she should have a real vocation, Raymond," said the lady uneasily. "Would it not be a great sin to interfere ? Yet it would kill me to part with her."

"It must not be," said Raymond, shortly. He had his own views on the subject, but it was useless bringing them forward to his mother ; and he knew her deep affection for her only daughter would be enough for her. "Thou must look to it, mother."

"But how ? and when thou art gone, Raymond ? Thou mightst influence her—thou dost. She is like another girl when thou art with her ; but without thee, in this lonely old castle, she will be more dreamy and lost than ever. What must I do, Raymond ?"

"I can think only of two things. The first, to send away Agnes ; the second, to seek some young companion of her own age. The first is my own suggestion ; the second, Father Joseph's."

"Send away Agnes, Raymond ! Why, Agnes is Muriel's only and constant companion."

"And the worst she could have. She fills her head with her own sick fancies. Nay, mother mine, I mean no disrespect to the worthy woman ; but she is no companion for a noble lady whose destiny is not the cloister. Having missed all that makes life beautiful herself, she seeks to persuade one, for whom it wears its fairest bloom, that it is a sin to love, to enjoy, to be happy. Mother, I speak what I know to be true, and I would save thee the grief of losing Muriel. Let Agnes go to the convent after which she is ever pining—and if it is to be without Muriel, let it be at once ; and seek some young maiden of gentle birth to be with Muriel. She is too much alone, and

the company that comes to the castle is mostly distasteful to her. Thou hadst an adopted sister in thy lonely youth, mother ; and I have heard thee say how thou didst love her, and how her presence brightened thy gloomy home."

"My poor Marguerite ! Thou knowest her story, Raymond ?"

"Yes ; but it is one little likely to be repeated. And she was happy in her burgher-husband after, thou saidst ?"

"I know not—poor Marguerite ! I would that I had seen her yet once more before she died. She was very like Muriel in some things, Raymond : as pious and saintly, yet more playful and bright, I remember—"

But Raymond knew, if his mother once began with reminiscences of past days, her mind would be diverted from the subject which, in the prospect of his departure from home, painfully engrossed his own ; and he contrived, gently and respectfully, to lead her back to it. "It is a companion—a friend—who may be to her the sister Heaven has denied her," he said, after some further conversation. "Mother, thou wilt see to this ?"

"Hast thou spoken to thy father, Raymond ?"

"No ; he sees not, as thou knowest, beyond the present, and Muriel is ever bright with him. And thou knowest he only laughs at her pretty saint's-play, as he calls it."

Meanwhile the short November afternoon was closing in ; the wind rose, sweeping up the narrow valley, or rather gorge, at the mouth of which the castle stood ; thick masses of clouds rolled up over the sky that had been blue and cloudless during the day ; and presently a violent storm of sleet was dashed furiously against the window in which the mother and son were sitting, blowing in cold and damp through the imperfect fastenings. The lady shivered, and cast wistful looks at her warm cushioned chair by the stove ; which Raymond perceiving, led her thither ; and on one of the maidens approaching with her broidery frame for her mistress's inspection, he turned away, saying he was going to seek Muriel.

The girl looked quickly up, as if some thought had struck her, then turned towards the window, which shook furiously with the blast. The look struck Raymond. "Know you where I shall find the Lady Muriel, Griselle?" he said.

"Sir,—my lord,—I fear," the girl stammered, "she is without in this storm; she can scarce have returned."

"Returned from whence?"

"She went with Agnes to St. Nicholas' cave, my lord."

Raymond gave his mother an expressive glance; but he only said, "Thou seest how it is," and strode from the room.

In a few minutes he was hurrying down a narrow, rugged path, that led to the bottom of the gorge. The fury of the storm swept him, stalwart youth as he was, rapidly before it; and the thought of his fragile sister struggling unaided against it spurred him onward. At the very bottom of the glen, a long flight of broken, irregular steps cut in the solid rock, led under an old bridge, across the bed of a torrent, into a low, damp cave, in which a holy man had lived for twenty years; fed, like another Elijah, by ravens, or, as others said, by angels, and honoured by visits of the Virgin herself. Special miracles had been wrought, it was said, in answer to prayers offered at the stone altar, which had been cut out of the rock by the saint (whose canonization was more than doubtful), and by the image of black decaying wood which stood upon it. Raymond shuddered as he thought how damp and slimy the place had appeared when he had last seen it on a bright summer's day; and as the sullen roar of the torrent caught his ear, he sprang forward with renewed speed: it was just possible that the stream might rise with the extreme rapidity peculiar to such mountain regions, and cut off retreat from the cave. But about half-way down the glen he came upon two female figures at a sudden bend in the rocky path, which he joyfully recognized as his sister and her waiting-woman.

Muriel sprang forward with a glad cry, and looked up into her brother's face with a happy, loving smile, as his protecting

arm was thrown round her. The rain and spray from the torrent hung in damp drops upon her face ; and her long bright hair, escaped from its fastening, blew round it, veiling, without quite concealing, its exceeding loveliness.

"Muriel, Muriel," Raymond said gravely and reproachfully, as he wrapped his own cloak closely around her slight form, "why is this ? wherefore art thou here ? Didst thou not promise me ?"

"Ah ! reproach me not, Raymond ; I could not help it ; and it was for thee !" she answered. But there was no opportunity for conversation on their rough homeward journey ; as they climbed up the sides of the gorge and left its shelter, the fury of the wind increased and met them face to face. It would have been almost impossible for the fragile Muriel to have held on her way without the aid of her brother's strong arm and protecting care. Guiding, almost carrying, her up the most difficult places, interposing his person between her and the roughest blasts, he at last saw her in safety within the castle gates, and in charge of the old nurse, Theresa ; and he hurried back once more into the blinding storm, to aid Agnes, who was little better capable than her mistress of climbing the rough mountain path in face of such a storm.

He found her sitting exhausted beneath a sheltering rock, and took the opportunity of gravely expostulating with her for allowing her mistress to expose herself so much, and for encouraging her in her too absorbing devotion to religious duties. But he found her, as usual, wholly impracticable and unimpressible ; and she warned him so solemnly of the heinousness of the sin of interfering with God's calling and a true vocation, that Raymond, who was by no means destitute of reverence or devotional feeling, as it was evoked in those times, was silenced, if not convinced ; though at the same time he resolved to urge his mother still further to get rid of Agnes at all costs.

CHAPTER IX.

CHARACTERS, AND WHAT FORMED THEM.

"Influence is the echo of our words and actions in the hearts of others."

Family Friend.



THE Castle of Vaudemont and the broad lands attached to it had been the dowry of the Lady Ermengarde. Her father, the old Count de Vaudemont, had married the youngest daughter of a Provençal noble, whose heritage was chiefly a glorious ancestry, renowned in field and celebrated in song, a ruinous castle, and a heavily mortgaged estate. She was a lovely maiden of seventeen, he a weather-beaten soldier more than three times her age. But he was rich, and offered sundry pecuniary advantages to the impoverished Marquis de Couci, in case he wedded the beautiful, dowerless Ermengarde, which overbalanced this in the father's eyes at least; and the fair rose of Provence was transplanted from her sunny southern land to the grim old castle on the rocky slopes of the Jura mountains. At first she had drooped and pined in her unwelcome and uncongenial exile, perhaps under the weight of other regrets and memories than those of the land of romance and beauty and song which she loved so passionately. But after the birth of her only child, the Lady Ermengarde of our story, her health and spirits had revived, and she had become reconciled to her new home. Still she did not forget the beloved country of her birth, and, as she never revisited it, she saw it, even to the last, through

the bright halo of girlish romance. And more than this : the gift of song, so prized and honoured there, was hers, and the first memories of the little Ermengarde were of listening entranced while her mother sang some sweet wild impromptu ballad of Provençal story ; or told some stirring tale of the old crusading times, when the De Couci banner had floated proudly in the Syrian breeze ; or related some high heroic deed of noble daring or faithful love or knightly truth, all linked with that high name that held so proud a place in Provençal lore and legend. What marvel that the child learned to look upon Provence as the paradise of earth ; upon the heritage of De Couci blood as the proudest boast of her life, especially as her mother's enthusiasm was shared by Theresa, her foster-sister and the child's nurse, who had followed her to her northern castle home ; and that as she sprang up to girlhood her maiden dreams were all of Provençal chivalry and romance !

She never lost this feeling, though, as is so often the case, her life had been the very reverse of the visions of her romantic youth. Betrothed in childhood by her old and prudent father to a rough German baron many years her senior, whom he deemed a fitting guardian and protector for an orphan heiress, which his failing health warned him his child would soon become, the vague hopes and visions of a brighter fate, such as her romantic training had taught her to delude herself into believing might yet be hers, never came to pass. Her father died when she was yet a child ; and when, a few years afterwards, the Baron von Ohrendorf claimed the fulfilment of the marriage-contract, her lot was decided. At eighteen she became the bride of the man whom she had not previously learned to love ; and though by degrees his goodness of heart and rough kindness taught her to trust and confide in him, the deeper feelings of her heart were never satisfied until she became a mother.

Her first real grief had been the sorrowful parting with one she had loved as a sister ; after that, the successive deaths of

four children, none of whom lived much beyond infancy. Over each tiny coffin she had shed meekly bitter tears, and when at last a baby came whose vigorous infancy differed as widely from that of his puny predecessors as his promise of personal appearance, it seemed to her as if at last her dreams were about to be realized. Her other infants had been fair-haired, blue-eyed Germans; this one had her mother's glorious Provençal eyes. It had always been subject of regret to the weak romance of her nature that she herself had her father's face and features rather than those of her mother; and now she rejoiced that the child that seemed likely to be spared to her would be a De Couci rather than a Vaudemont or Ohrendorf, and proud were her dreams of the knightly fame her gallant Raymond would win—fame that should rival that of his proudest ancestors.

Her mother had died a few months after her marriage. Theresa was still living, an old and feeble woman now; as full as ever of her favourite stories and legends, and loving Raymond and Muriel almost as much as their mother did. She had married one of the old count's retainers, but he and her only son had been killed in one of the many petty wars that were so common at that period, and her bereaved heart centred all its affection upon them. To her lady's distrust of and dislike to the innovation of making learning part of a knightly education, she added an unfeigned horror of any opposition to the teachings of the Church; and it was with shuddering dread she listened to the conversation of some of the guests who had of late years sat at the castle table; at which, according to the custom of the times, the domestics of the household took their place, only separated from the family and visitors by a huge salt-cellar. Especially had she been terrified by the words of the bold Hütten, who had not scrupled to admit openly that the doctrines of men had been made to usurp the place of Christ's commands; and to assert the right, nay, even the duty, of all men in whose power it lay, to put their shoulder to the wheel, and help to drag the sacred car of

Divine Truth out of the miry slough of ecclesiastical corruption in which it was all but buried.

It was her fears and lamentations concerning the dangers that awaited Raymond's soul in the place to which he was going, still more the gloomy forebodings of Agnes, that had worked upon Muriel's affection, and prompted her to undertake the visit to the cell of St. Nicholas on that wintry day, in order that she might implore for him the special favour and protection of the Virgin in the place sanctified by so much devotion and saintly merit, where her own prayers might find the most ready acceptance.

Raymond had not overestimated the influence Agnes might exercise over Muriel's destiny. One of the waifs drifted into human life how or where no one knows ; brought up a stranger and an intruder among the rough and numerous family of a mountain peasant ; possessing a deep nature, and eager, passionate heart, with instincts and tastes differing widely from, in that they were so far above, those with whom her lot was cast ; every natural outlet of feeling closed for her and against her, Agnes had fallen, when yet a young girl, into the way of one of the wandering preachers of the Dominican Order. This man was a true fanatic, intensely believing in all he preached. Agnes felt herself stirred by the burning words he uttered as she had never been before. To him she laid bare the secret yearning of her repressed and lonely heart. It was no hard task for the man, who was no deceiver, but simply an enthusiast, to fill her young mind with his gloomy creed, and to stamp upon it the imprint of his own. He taught her to believe love and happiness, and all the pleasant things of life, the gifts of a God whose tender mercies are over all his works, were unmingled evil ; that austerity and self-denial were the only good ; that in the renunciation of all ties, in the crucifixion of all hopes and affections, were salvation and purity to be found. And he depicted in glowing words the holy rest enjoyed, and the rapturous emotions of those who, turning from the seductions of

the world and the allurements of the flesh, fixed their hearts, like the pure and holy beings who had trod it before them, upon the path of obedience and mortification, and sought in their favour and sanction their sole object and regard. He held up before her the blessed peace and purity of a life of sanctity and devotion, such as could be found only in freedom from all earthly ties and hopes.

The seed fell upon prepared ground, and sprang up in a growth of fervid if misplaced devotion. She imagined that she had voluntarily resigned the good things of this life, which had really never been hers to relinquish ; never opening her heart to human affections, she received none in return, and looked down in lofty scorn upon those who preferred to barter their eternal gain for the poor husks of time. It may be wondered that she had not sought the more congenial air of the convent. She had done so, but penniless lay sisters were in no great request ; and having been repulsed at the gates of several into which she craved admittance, she came to the conclusion that the special mission which her spiritual monitor had assured her would undoubtedly crown her holy and devoted life awaited her without its walls.

And now she thought she had found it in the salvation of the Lady Muriel from the worldly life which was opening before her. Agnes was no longer young, and her influence over the young and lonely lady was such as amply to justify all Raymond's fears. She had been for some years an inmate of the Castle of Vaudemont, and though really her post was that of the Lady Ermengarde's bower-woman, she was generally the attendant of the Lady Muriel's walks, and the companion of many of her lonely hours.

The Baron von Ohrendorf was a rough type of the noble of the period, rude in manner and in speech, and whose chief pleasures were the wine-cup, a raid on a neighbour's rights, and the chase. It was certainly matter of small inconvenience to him that he was unable even to write his own name : he trusted

to his good sword to settle his disputes, rather than to such weak things as treaties or agreements, and was only too ready to draw it. But he was not without a certain amount of shrewdness and comprehension of the signs of the times; a proof of which was given in his raising no objection to his son's wish for further instruction than the castle-chaplain, Father Joseph, had been able to afford him and Muriel; and his Swiss abhorrence of the exorbitant claims of the Pope, and the contempt and hatred for the priests very generally felt by his class, made him favourably disposed to the new light and learning, whose chief use, in his idea, was to expose the misdoings of the sacerdotal class.

And besides this, under a rough exterior and rude manners, Baron Wolfgang von Ohrendorf had a warm and loving heart, and was passionately attached to his son, the sole survivor of so many blighted hopes, and to his beautiful and gentle daughter. Proud of his Raymond's noble promise, and influenced more than he knew by his mental power, so greatly superior to his own, he was anxious that he should be fitted to take a prominent place in the new day that was coming. Old ways, old customs were dying out. The shrewd old baron saw that; and though for himself he regretted this, and obstinately opposed it, for his son, who seemed to him almost a being of another mould from the rough, wild companions of his own youth, he was willing to sacrifice his prejudice. And as Raymond had already more than once displayed unexceptionable daring and prowess in arms, there was the less reason for opposing his wish, shared in common with most of the other young nobles of his time, of drinking at the fountains of knowledge so recently opened afresh in the various universities of Europe. Long accustomed to treat his wife as a spoiled child, whose whims and fancies must be humoured if desirable, set aside if not, he received her objections with good-humoured ridicule; and Raymond, as we have seen, was about to spend some time at the chief seats of learning. He had already

passed a few months at the university recently opened at Berne; and it was on his return from this brief absence that he was alarmed by Muriel's pensive seriousness, and startled to find all her thoughts tinged with religious gravity.

Not that this was altogether new : from a child she had been remarkable for her enthusiastic religious devotion. Often she spent hours alone in the castle-chapel, or sitting on the steps leading to it. Saintry story or legend had greater fascination for her than the Provençal romances with which her mother's memory and that of old Theresa were so abundantly stored ; and her greatest treasure was a large illuminated copy of the Lives of the Saints that Father Joseph had procured for her, at great cost, from the monastery of Berne ; and with her own hand she had copied down additional ones from some fusty manuscript in the old chaplain's possession. There she read of love and beauty and fame, graceful youth and noble manhood, worldly possessions and earthly happiness, laid at the foot of the cross—of weak human steps treading in the print of the Crucified's—of heroic devotion, and martyr courage, and spotless sanctity—of ecstatic visions, and holy raptures, and forestalled glory—of power given to heal and to succour and to save ; and to her eyes it seemed a noble and a glorious thing to resign the empty joys and sin-tainted affections and engrossing duties of earth, like Him who went first in the race, and receive in return the pure ambrosia of spiritual delights and purity. No hours were happier to her than those when she could get Raymond to sit on the battlements, or in the pine-woods, or, in the winter-time, in some sheltered nook within the castle, and read with her the stories she loved so well,—of the martyred virgin Agnes, the constant and tortured Eulalia, the crucified bride Maura, the holy, highly-favoured Catherine of Sienna, the sweet and lovely Elizabeth of Hungary, the pious slave-queen Bathilde, the tender friend of the sick and the suffering Rosalia, and others, over whose saintly virtues and fervent devotion she would wonder and weep.

This deep veneration and pious reverence grew with her growth, and strengthened as her character developed. That it should do so was scarcely wonderful. Hers was a deep, thoughtful nature, a mind rather contemplative than vigorous, a heart full of warm and deep affections, a refined and sensitive spirit. Though she learned with Raymond all that Father Joseph could teach, that all was reading and writing, with a little very imperfect Latin; and there were no books in the castle save one or two of the dry, lengthy romances of the period, and some copies of the later Church Fathers belonging to the chaplain. So there was absolutely no food for Muriel's mind and imagination, save those records of deified mortals, over the falsehood and absurdity of which we feel tempted to smile now.

And in them, alas! in the faith and devotedness and self-denial of the servant, the love and grace of the Master were lost sight of;—for the pure, spiritual worship of redeemed and forgiven souls, the hard service of physical and mental bondage was substituted—the shadow for the substance, the false for the true, the letter for the spirit. The highest grace was made to consist in renouncing all God's good gifts, in leaving the position in which he had placed each individual, in crushing down every feeling in the hearts he had made such as they were; the greatest purity, in shrinking from that holy tie which he himself has used as the highest type of the most glorious truth—the union of Christ and his Church. The young enthusiastic girl, on the threshold of womanhood, was taught to look upon all the pure affections of family life as so many hindrances to spiritual life; upon the hopes and dreams and yearnings natural to her age, as sin and impurity. And deep within her soul was a craving for the high and the good and the true, a strong sense of the noble and the beautiful, a longing desire for purity and holiness. Before her seemed to stretch two paths: one of earthly happiness and human love, such as her womanly instinct told her might be hers in the beautiful world—to untried youth it is ever such—upon which she was but now entering; the

other, of bitter sacrifice, and barren, joyless austerity, from which nature shrank back appalled. But upon one rested, she believed, the gloom of spiritual death, upon the other the light of heaven.

Which should she choose? In the happy days of unreasoning childhood this conflict had been unforeseen, the time of decision was far off and unrealized; and, perhaps, it was not till her brother's absence threw her entirely upon herself, that she woke to the consciousness that what she had hitherto looked upon as lovely pictures and beautiful dreams, were models on which her own life must be fashioned, or witnesses against her of holiness scorned and sin embraced. Such thoughts had, indeed, arisen before; but startled, terrified, she had put them from her,—and with Raymond's dear companionship this had not been difficult. But when he was gone, and her only resources were her fond, weak mother, and the stern, fanatical Agnes, she could no longer silence the haunting voice. A veil seemed suddenly swept from her eyes, new meaning arose in every well-known religious duty, new depths were opened in her soul. With desperate earnestness she sought to stifle the cries of conscience by rigid observance of every religious form, by prayer and vow, by pilgrimage and offering. Anything, anything but that one dread alternative.

And when Raymond returned, he found her changed and variable: at times grave, thoughtful, depressed; at times gay, with a kind of reckless, feverish excitement, very different from her old sweet playfulness. Yet when he questioned her as to the cause of this, he found it was a thing of which she would not or could not speak; and by degrees she became more like her old gentle, even self. But Raymond was not deceived; his love for Muriel was deep and tender, she had been almost the only companion of his boyhood and youth, their souls had been bared to one another, their young dreams gone over together, and he had thus a key wherewith to unlock the secrets of her heart.

The conclusion at which he arrived we have already seen. The thought of his dearly-loved sister, in her all-bright youth and most unusual beauty, torn away from her home, from the world in which she was so fitted to shine, immured in convent walls, robed in a nun's coarse garb, lost to him, and all who loved her, for ever, was intolerable.

And this was not all. It was morning time. The sun was rising, and the lights that seemed bright and clear in the midnight darkness of the past burned dimly, and with uncertain, impure light, in the breaking-day beams. The faith of Raymond's youth in the purity and blessedness of the cloister had been shaken. Men's eyes had long been opening to a sense of spiritual wickedness in high places, to a corruption that had taken the place of godliness ; to sensuality, and greed, and extortion concealed under the garb of religion. And the voice that was about to make Europe ring with its bold denunciations of these things had already spoken them in Raymond's ears.

About seven years previously, when Raymond was some ten or twelve years old, a young man claimed the well-known hospitality of the Castle of Vaudemont. He was exhausted with toil and travel, his knightly garb was tattered and travel-stained, his shoes worn out, and his purse empty ; yet he bore the name of one of the noblest families of Franconia. He was received with much kindness, and kindly nursed by the Lady Ermengarde during a brief illness, which was the result of the hardships and privations which he had undergone during some years of almost penniless wandering through the various states of Europe. He was about twenty-three years of age, with a short, slight figure, expressive features, and eyes of remarkable brilliancy and vivacity. His manners were courteous, his disposition amiable ; and Raymond conceived for him that enthusiastic admiration and devotion that often spring up in a boy's heart towards an older companion, in whom he thinks to have discovered the embodiment of his ideal. His wonderful accounts of strange and distant countries, his thrilling tales of

adventure by land and sea, were naturally attractive to a high-spirited boy. But there was that in the stranger-knight that was still more so to Raymond. His high, chivalrous thoughts, his noble ideas of truth and liberty, his glorious dreams and soaring aspirations, his enthusiastic belief in a coming day of freedom, when the rusty fetters of ages should be snapped, and Truth should shake her snowy pinions from the gathered dust of centuries, and soar once more on free wing in the light of heaven; these things touched a kindred chord in the boy's generous heart, though he was too young to understand the full import of the dreams and words of the young poet-knight. The latter departed on his journey to Italy, but the echo roused in Raymond's soul never wholly died away; and when they met again—a few months before the time of which we write—his old boyish admiration was exchanged for a measure of fellow-feeling and fellow-enthusiasm.

That knightly wanderer was no other than Ulrich von Hütten—the “poet and orator of the Reformation,” whose brilliant genius and chivalrous spirit contrast so painfully with his troubled life, and mournful, untimely death; whose brief career was like the vivid flash of a meteor, making the surrounding gloom still more visible, and dimming the pale, pure lustre of the stars, the night's true lights, in its fiery gleam, then sinking swiftly, suddenly, leaving no trace behind.

Yet this last may scarce be said of Ulrich von Hütten. It was a time when bold hands and strong, daring spirits and fiery, were needed. And through the wrecks and ruins of the abuses and corruptions and superstitions which his bold invectives and withering sarcasms hurled remorselessly from their high pinnacles, the pioneers of the truth pressed forward, bearing the light of life amidst the ruins of a dead faith.

Did that light ever shine upon Ulrich von Hütten himself, or was it his part only to make a way by which it might reach others? It would be too sad to believe this, too sad to think all his sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of truth were, for him-

self, in vain ; that he who dashed down with such righteous indignation man's cumbrous superstructure of wood, hay, stubble, never discovered or rested upon God's foundation ; that in entering the lists as the champion of truth, he never knew Him who is "*The Truth*." And yet we can but sorrowfully own that little in his short, troubled life, looks like the conduct of one who had found Him who is not only the Truth, but also the Way and the Life ; that little in his words and writings savours of the spirit of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. Hope we may feel in the infinite grace of Him who will not quench the smoking flax, beside the lowly grave of the brilliant, generous, gifted Hütten, but not confidence, not assurance.

The time at which our story finds him was, perhaps, the happiest and most peaceful of his life—a

"Brief rest upon the turning billow's height."

In April 1517 he had been knighted at Augsburg by the Emperor Maximilian, and crowned poet and orator by the beautiful Constance Pentinger, the Pearl of Augsburg. After this triumphal day, his father and friends, who had never forgiven his flight from the Monastery of Fulda, to which he had been consigned in his boyhood on account of his delicate health, relented, and Ulrich became once more an inmate of the family castle of Steckelberg on the Rhine, regarded no longer as a proscribed and worthless wanderer, but with honour and affection. But this gleam of prosperity was to be of short duration ; even then his busy brain and pen were at work upon the productions that were again to rouse the storm against him.

On his return from his second visit to Italy, Ulrich had again visited the Castle of Vaudemont, and found in Raymond a sympathetic listener and an apt scholar. The vices and corruptions of Rome had been set before the latter in a startling light ; and he had heard things of monastic and conventual life that had made him shudder with horror at the thought of his sister being exposed to such. True, even Hütten admitted

there were exceptions ; but he gave a general view so dark and strong, that Raymond was staggered, if not convinced : and what he had lately heard at Berne had not weakened the impression.

Still Raymond regarded these things only as the fruits of the shameful misconduct of the clergy and prelates, the incrustation of error formed during ages of darkness ; and with beating heart he listened while Hütten spoke of the might of truth rending asunder the thick mist of falsehood, breaking the iron fetters of superstition and spiritual tyranny, and erecting the glorious temple of Freedom on the wreck of a bondage past and gone for ever, and panted for the knowledge that would enable him to share in this glorious work.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEREAVED HOME.

“Heaven
Sends resignation down, and faith ; and last
Of all, there falls a kind oblivion
Over the going out of that sweet light
In which we had our being.”—J. WILSON.



MORE than a year had passed since the bright morning that rose so mournfully upon the Reinhardt family, and the first keen anguish of the bitter bereavement it brought had passed with it. That empty chair could now be looked at with a milder pang ; that dear name could now be spoken with steady lips ; memory's faithful echoes of that beloved voice could be listened to with sweet, sad pleasure. Life's great wheel turns steadily on, pausing neither for the wail of the mourner nor for the song of the happy. And the vacant place in the household throws new burdens and new duties upon those that are left. So by degrees the chasm left in heart and life is bridged over, the lost presence that made it is less missed, new cares and new hopes and new fears take the place of the old, the sorrow grows older like the hearts it once crushed, and at last the beloved dead sleep quietly in the graves in which it once seemed all of earthly happiness and hope was quenched for ever for those they left behind. Not forgotten, not forsaken, not replaced ; holding their own place still in memory's sacred shrine, but finding none in the outer life, which time has long rendered

other than that of which they formed the centre and main-spring.

But as yet the wound death's arrow made in the agonized hearts of husband and children, the day it struck home to her for whom its sting was taken away, was fresh and deep. If daily life went on as usual, if light steps and cheerful voices were heard again where hers would come no more ; if patient sadness and subdued cheerfulness had taken the place of wild wailings and bitter sobs ; if the tears that still often steeped the midnight pillow rarely fell at hearth or board,—none, oh ! none the less, was the gentle presence of her who “was not” needed and missed, and craved for,—none the less darkened was the home from which so much of love's priceless light was gone.

Time is called the great healer ; doubtless he is such. But as yet he had only stanchd the outward flow from those torn heart-strings ; sore was the silent aching, free the inward bleeding still.

And to them that beloved mother “*was not.*” They knew not that she had only gone home, only entered the fold to which the Good Shepherd, unseen, unknown, had been leading her for long years past—only been received, in answer to her Saviour's loving prayer, “Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am,” into the eternal presence of Him whose love “passeth knowledge,” where there is “fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.”

From their earthly path she was gone, around them lay the mute tokens that those busy hands were folded for evermore ; but when they sought to follow the parted spirit, what saw they ? what heard they ? The awful gloom and lurid flames of purgatory—the bitter wailings of an agonized soul undergoing the fearful purifying ordeal. And if their fond hopes soared beyond this ; if they trusted that one so pure, and pious, and saintly,—whose last act had been to perform a pilgrimage to which such high grace was attached, and the cost of which had been so fatal that to their eyes something of a martyr glory en-

circled it,—could scarce need much more cleansing ; if they hoped that the gold from their father's purse, that had glittered on shrine and altar in no stinted measure, would win all that was necessary of saintly intercession,—that priestly prayer and solemn mass would, united with all these things, speedily open the gates of heaven—nay, that they had opened them—what great comfort had they ? What knew they of that far-off, distant heaven, the glorious court of Him whom they knew not save as King and Judge, whose attributes of awful majesty and stern justice and terrible power had alone been taught them ? how could they find sweet meaning in the thought that their lost one was with Him who to them was only a Name, a dread, mysterious Being—not a Father, not even a Friend ?

Ah ! they had never heard of the “place prepared” by the Great Forerunner, of the “many mansions in the Father's house ;” sweet, familiar home picture, drawn by hands that make no false line, tint with no false colour, of a household in which none can be strangers, because all in it are children of one great family, one “in heaven and earth.” No ; the few wondrous master-touches which alone depict what and where we shall be when we step from the narrow ante-chamber of Time into the vast throne-room of Eternity, had been shrouded from mourners' eyes by man's presumptuous hands. He, without whom heaven would be no heaven, had been ignored, maligned, superseded ; and instead of the untold treasures of deep, exhaustless meaning, bound up in the Spirit's description of the state of departed redeemed ones, “*for ever with the Lord,*” they had but vague, shadowy ideas of a bliss that was very hard to realize, for it was a bliss in which *love* had no share. When the balance had at last been struck between merit and demerit, and an entrance into it had been hardly gained through long endurance of fiery pangs, where would be found place for love ? When the concluding term of a hard bargain has been struck justice may be satisfied, but will not love be dead ?

Sad must partings have been in those days—sad with a sadness on which God's pure light of love was not allowed to shine. But oh! how sweet must the waking have been to some of the Lord's hidden ones, found by him at least, in every age, who clung feebly, timidly, perhaps almost hopelessly, not to the carven cross, but to the spotless Victim that died upon it,—not to the chiselled crucifix, but to the great reality of which it was the symbol,—when they opened the eyes, closed for ever on earth, not on the expected horrors of purgatory, but on the face of Jesus!

A great sorrow leaves no heart as it found it. For good or for evil, its brand-mark will be stamped deep on the character. The outer life of the Reinhardt family went on as before—the sound—but it was like that of an instrument from which the sweetest key has gone; in every familiar tune there is something wanting; in every new melody a blank that renders it unintelligible.

The natural effect of the terrible shock of the mother's death had been to bring on an excruciating access of Paul's malady, from which for many weeks it seemed impossible he could rally; and it was months before—slowly, painfully and unwillingly—he struggled back to the state in which he had been when it occurred.

Max and Friedel had returned from Basle a few weeks after their mother's death, and had since remained at home, studying under Oswald Myconius, the enlightened and talented master of the cathedral school. It was Herr Reinhardt's will that his twin-sons should succeed him in his business, but he had given them every facility for acquiring the knowledge his shrewd mind foresaw would be no hindrance, but rather a help, in any sphere for the future.

Since his wife's death the father had taken little notice of his family. People said it had changed him little, and that he had quite got over the shock. They were wrong. The one sweet, softening influence, was gone from the stern man's life; but

while missing it daily, hourly, he resolutely kept down all expression of his pain, and faced the world with unmoved countenance. In business, in the council, he was keener, shrewder than before—harder, and more absorbed in the latter. In his home he enveloped himself in an impenetrable mantle of reserve, rarely addressing any of his children, except to give some command or prohibition, receiving all the little tender cares with which they sought to win his approbation or affection, with sullen silence or scarce concealed impatience. There was only one exception to this—for Clare he had always a smile and fond word; and the little offices which her mother had ever performed for him all fell to her share.

One subject roused him wherever mentioned, abroad or at home; this was the progress of the new doctrine that was springing up everywhere. To it, to the doctrine itself, to those who taught it, he opposed a bitterness of calm, passionless, resolute resistance, that withstood alike question, and argument, and entreaty.

The wild poignancy of sorrow with which the children Hans and Clare had met this their first grief, had subsided. Hans was wild, lively, and troublesome as before, and seemed to have ceased to miss his mother except when reminded of her. Not so Clare; her merry laugh and bounding step echoed as gaily as ever through the old house; her lovely face wore smiles as sunny and unclouded as those that had gladdened her lost mother's heart; but that dear name often rose unbidden to her lips, and she loved better to sit with Madeline or Bertha, and speak of that lost mother, than to pursue her best loved game or occupation.

Even Paul would listen to such talk from her. Even Paul, poor, weary, wayward, sullen Paul. Poor, poor Paul! the one ray of light that gladdened his clouded life, the one star that illumined the dark night of his trial, was gone—gone for ever. And his spirit sank utterly, hopelessly, despairingly. No smile ever lighted his wan, worn face; no pleasant words ever came

from between his pale, set lips ; no animation ever gave even passing lustre to those dark sunken eyes—heavy with pain and gloom. Day after day, week after week, month after month, passed on, but brought no change. For many weeks after his mother's death, intense physical pain had absorbed every faculty, and perhaps prevented him from fully realizing his loss ; but as that abated, and the portals of death were once more closed in his face, he awoke to a full sense of the added darkness of his lot. At first he gave way to paroxysms of despairing grief, of frantic rebellion against his hard lot and the cruelty of the God who ordered it, followed by fits of utter exhaustion, and often by relapses, sufficiently serious to cause renewed anxiety on the part of his patient, tender nurses—of fresh hope on his own. Death was all he courted.

But by degrees these gave way to a sullen apathy of despair, from which nothing could rouse him. He would listen, or not listen, they could scarce tell which, to the things of the outer world which were told him, to the exhortations and remonstrances of the priest who had visited him from a child ; but rarely betrayed the slightest interest in the former, never the least in the latter. His very voice was changed and become cold, bitter, passionless. And, what was more trying than all, he appeared wholly indifferent to the love and tenderness and sympathy with which all ministered to him. Mechanically he took all that was offered to him, did all that was required of him, but seemed not to have the least preference for the presence or services of any one of them, unless it was little Clare's. His words to her were less bitter, and he showed less of the fretful irritability which was the only variation from his ordinary sullen gloom, and sometimes seemed even pleased with her innocent talk.

During the months of his increased illness, Lisig, the faithful old nurse, had shared Madeline's care ; but her increasing infirmities rendered it impossible for her to continue to do so, and Bertha had learned to take her part, Paul no longer show-

ing the least discrimination between her and Madeline. A few months prior to the time of which we write, at Friedel's suggestion, and with the doctor's cordial sanction, a couch for Paul had been placed in the ordinary living-room, and he was carried to and from it each day by one of his brothers. To this arrangement he made no demur, and it was thought that as he was then really physically able to bear it, it might be the means of rousing him from his mental torpor, as well as of relieving Madeline from the constant confinement to one room which had already told painfully upon her health.

But the cause of Paul's unchanging gloom lay deeper than human love or skill could probe. One hand alone could heal that broken heart, deliver that Satan-bound captive, recover sight to those blind eyes, set at liberty that sorely-bruised spirit—and that the pierced hand of Him against whom every pulse of that poor passion-torn being had throbbed with fierce resentment, as against the Author of its existence and the Arbiter of its fate, until it sank low in the dead, cold stillness of an infidel calm.

Yes, Paul had come to that. Earth and heaven were alike dark to him.

Bertha was busier than ever; what with household cares, Lisig's helplessness, and Paul's necessities, she had little leisure. Her face had grown harder, colder, graver. The lines round lip and brow had deepened, her voice had become sharper, her temper quicker. In the first days of stunned amaze and bewilderment, she alone had been composed and calm, managing everything, thinking of everything. It was to Madeline or Lisig the little ones went for the comfort they could only give by sharing their tears. And when poor Madeline, in the passionate anguish of her sorrow and loneliness, sought sympathy and comfort from her, Bertha's stiff, formal kindness, and immovable composure, so different from the sweet tenderness and quick comprehension that had hitherto shared all her troubles, chilled and repelled her, and she soon ceased to seek it. She

little thought what unspeakable bitterness filled her sister's heart, little imagined what depth of feeling that cold, calm manner covered. She knew not that the new sorrow had awoke an old one to fresh intensity ; that the reserve to which she had at first painfully schooled herself had become a fetter too strong to be easily broken ; and she might have continued to think of Bertha as of one whose nature was too commonplace, and whose sensibilities were too obtuse, to admit of deep love or grief, but for one little incident, one brief glimpse under the veil which enveloped her inner being.

One day—it was many months after the mother's death—Madeline, needing something for Paul out of Bertha's stores, sought her vainly through the house, until, with a sudden thought, she paused at the door of the room that had been her mother's. A sound of bitter weeping came from within. With a sudden pang of compunction for her hard thoughts, she opened the door, to find Bertha kneeling beside the bed, with her head laid upon her clasped arms that rested upon it. She did not hear the opening of the door, and for a moment Madeline stood transfixed, listening to the half-suffocating sobs, and, what moved her still more, the cry of "Mother ! O mother, mother !" with which from time to time they were mingled. There was depth of anguish in the tone, that revealed to Madeline more of her sister's heart than she had ever known before.

"Bertha, dear Bertha," she said, kneeling down beside her, and throwing her arms round her.

For the first time aware she was not alone, Bertha started to her feet, and, struggling hard for composure, would have put aside her sister's clinging arms. But Madeline continued : "O Bertha, why shouldst thou hide thy tears from me ? Why should we not weep together ? Would not *she* have wished it ?"

For one moment Bertha struggled against her overpowering emotion ; the next she suffered Madeline to draw her down beside her on the bed, and lay her head on her bosom. For a time they wept together in silence ; then Madeline said, "Dear

Bertha, I have been wronging thee sorely all this while. I have thought, because thou didst not weep, and pine, and lose thy care for everything, as I have done, that thou didst not miss her ; because thou wert so calm and strong, that thy grief was but light. And my heart was angry and bitter against thee. Now I see how wrong I have been in judging thee thus hardly. It is no passing pang that has made *thee* weep thus."

"Passing pang !" Bertha murmured. "O Madeline, thou knowest not ! When I wake in the morning to another day without *her*, my heart dies within me. But the burden must be taken up, the house must be ordered, and the maidens set to work. It would not lighten my father's, grief or thine, child, to see the household in confusion, while I sat nursing my sorrow ; neither would it ease mine."

"Dear Bertha, forgive me that I misjudged thee so ; but I could not bear that life should be the same to thee without her."

"The *same*, Madeline!"—her sobs had ceased, and she spoke in low, broken tones, scarcely recognizable as those of the voice usually so measured and even, with averted face and fixed gaze—"the *same* ! when the last sunbeam has died out of it—when the only connecting link that made my bright, happy girlhood, one with my dark, blighted womanhood, is snapped—when the only gentle influence that stood between me and the dark, cold, evil self that is all that is left of me, is gone from it !—the *same* ! when the only one in whose dear eyes I read ever, ever, and always, love, and sympathy, and comprehension—love in spite of all the unlovableness, and hardness, and outward coldness, that shut me out from all other, as surely as dungeon walls shut out sunshine—sympathy with me in all that has been, in all that was—comprehension, that needed not the words my sealed lips may never speak. While she lived, there was one who knew why I am thus, what I was before the lightning scathed me ; one whose pity I could brook, whose know-

ledge I could endure. I have lost all this, and thou thoughtest life was the same to me !”

“ O Bertha, Bertha, I have indeed misjudged thee cruelly ! But I knew not that it was thus with thee. I have heard people say thou wert strangely changed ; but none spoke to me of a sorrow that had done it.”

“ No ; that at least is spared me. Dislike is better to me than scornful pity,” said Bertha, with darkly flashing eyes.

For a few moments Madeline was silent. Her heart felt bursting with love and tenderness towards the sister whom she had till then so little understood, while her sensitive mind shrank from seeking to force a confidence ; but at last she said : “ Dear Bertha, I know I can never be to thee half what the mother was—never, never ! But I can love thee—I do love thee, Bertha ! I would not seek to pry into thy secrets, ask to know what thou wouldst not tell ; but if thou couldst let me share thy sorrow. Oh, it must be so dreary to have a grief buried deep down in the heart, unknown, unsoothed—a wound unstanched by love and sympathy. Bertha, I could not bear it. All the balm I have had in this our sorrow has been the tenderness of those who shared it with me, except—” She paused, hesitated, then continued : “ O Bertha, my heart aches for thee ! All this time I have been thinking thee so cold and hard, thou hast been suffering, even when I was so happy. But I shall misjudge thee no more. If I may know the cause of thy pain, I may understand thee better ; if not, I shall still love and sympathize with thee.”

“ Ask me not to lift the veil from the past, Madeline : it cannot be ! And that I might tell thee is no tale for such as thou, with hope deep in thine heart, and life’s untried pathway lying fair before thee. Thou wilt rise from this sorrow. Madeline, such griefs crush, wither not. Death severs not like— But no more of this. Look not so wistful, dearest, or I shall grieve that thou camest hither.”

“ No, Bertha, no ; be glad, for I am. Tell me but this :

do the others—Max, and Friedel, and Paul—know of thy trial?”

“No, Madeline; none but *her*. They were too young. And I sank not weakly. But come; Paul will be needing thee.” And Madeline, suddenly remembering that he was indeed in great need of the remedy for which she came, hastened to seek it, while Bertha went to her room till her usual composure was restored.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAY-STAR RISES.

"I Jesus....am the bright and morning star."—REV. xxii. 16.



HOUGH Madeline's first sorrow fell upon her with crushing weight, her heart was too strong in the might of unselfish love to sink utterly beneath it, when there were those left to whom she might minister comfort and soothing. And Paul's danger and extreme suffering gave ample scope for its exercise. While watching beside his couch, anticipating every want, seeking with unwearied patience, that shrank from no fatigue, to alleviate his pain and soothe his restlessness, she felt a sweet satisfaction in the knowledge that she was doing just what her mother would have had her do.

But, as Paul began to rally, a time of deep trial awaited her. Fearfully distressing were his paroxysms of anguish and despair—pangs for which she had no balm but that of sympathy and love. And it seemed as if these utterly failed. Yet even this was not the worst. There came a time when there was little to do but to sit quietly in his room, while he lay still and silent, needing nothing, no longer suffering such a measure of bodily pain as required extraordinary remedies, but with nerves wrought to a pitch that could not bear even the slightest jar, and mind steeped in apathy or torpor, from which he would not be roused.

Then the reaction set in, and the poor child fully realized all she had lost. At times the unspeakable yearning for her mother's help and sympathy and love was more than she could bear, and for a while her sorrow would overwhelm her. Then Bertha was always ready to take her place, always contriving ways by which her physical burden might be lightened ; but Madeline's heart craved for more than this. Friedel was her greatest help ; his almost womanly tenderness soothed and comforted her, and he and Max were ever seeking to cheer and comfort her in their respective ways ; Max by stimulating and rousing, Friedel by petting her, and talking of her whom they both missed so sorely. But none could fill the place that was left so achingly void ; and as the months wore on, and Paul's deep depression became more marked and confirmed, it became too evident that Madeline's health was giving way under the constant strain of all her powers of mind and body. She grew pale and thin, and was indeed changed from the bright-faced maiden who had tripped so lightly upon the mountain-path on that memorable journey to Einsiedeln,—changed no less in looks than in heart. Then she stood on the verge of maidenhood, with childhood's innocent gaiety mingling with the dawning consciousness of life's opening responsibilities. Now, under the hot-bed culture of sorrow and anxiety, her character had developed and her mind expanded. In the solemn presence of death, in the hushed chamber of sickness, a voice, until then unheard, awoke deep thoughts and earnest questionings in her heart.

And then she sought to recall the words spoken by Ulric Zwingle in the chapel of Our Lady at Einsiedeln. She had become conscious of new desires, new needs. The first great lesson of the instability of earthly happiness, of the limited power of the strongest human love to satisfy the cravings of an immortal spirit, had come to her. There was meaning for her now in the solemn names of death and eternity, for each was linked with her mother. And there came to her a realization of the unspeakable importance of caring for the never-dying

soul, which must one day pass through the dread portals of death into the great, unknown, fathomless mystery which lay beyond it. And with the attempt to do this, the inevitable sense of incapacity and failure and sinfulness.

Very vague was Madeline's remembrance of that sermon ; two sentences only remained indelibly fixed in her memory. These were the text, "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," and the oft-repeated assertion, "Christ alone saves, and saves everywhere ;" but she retained an impression that Christ's grace and Christ's love and Christ's salvation were its burden, all placed in a new, clear light—the light of free gift.

Little Clare's simple faith helped her more than anything. The child had never forgotten the words her mother had spoken to her on their way home from Einsiedeln. Simply she had received the truth, that the Lord Christ had died for her because he loved her ; that he loved her still, and cared for her to love him. She would often speak of this in her simple way ; and Madeline, remembering and understanding her mother's words more clearly, began to feel a new, sweet hope, that perhaps some great mistake had been made, and that the terrible Christ whom men had learned to fear, was indeed the gracious, loving One, of whom she had heard such wonderful things at Einsiedeln.

Step by step, unconsciously to herself, she grew to feel sure of this ; and one day, as she lay on her bed, where Bertha had placed her after one of the uncontrollable paroxysms of hysterical weeping with which Nature resented the too great strain upon her powers, too exhausted to weep or think, her whole being filled with unutterable longing for one touch of her mother's hand on her throbbing brow, one hour of her sweet sympathy, the words, "Come unto ME, unto ME, unto MYSELF—not to my mother, not to the saints, not to the priests—come unto ME," floated suddenly into her mind, with the recollection that she had heard them at Einsiedeln. Stored far away in some hidden

recess of memory, they had not been found when she had sought to recall more of the wonderful words of which she retained so dim an impression, but for which she longed with eager soul-hunger. But then they were "brought to remembrance" by Him who is at once quickener, remembrancer, comforter; and when *He* brings things to mind, they come with power even to poor, dark, bewildered hearts, that little know wherefore. Madeline knew not the voice that spoke, scarcely dared trust the holy whisper, lest it should be of Satan; but the infinite tenderness of the words, "Come unto ME," fell like healing balm on her poor bruised heart.

"He said it was thus the Lord Christ spoke," she thought; "and mother said it was no heresy, but God's truth he preached. Oh! does the Lord Christ indeed speak thus to all—to me?" And instantly came the impulse to ask him herself. Sinking on her knees beside the bed, with clasped hands, and voice broken with sobs, she cried to him who had already begun to lead her blind soul by a way it knew not, even while her feet were yet stumbling among the dark mountains: "O Lord Christ, if thou art indeed thus loving and merciful and forgiving—if these words are thine indeed—if thou ALONE dost save—hear me, help me! If thou art love, oh, love *me*; if thou dost save freely, oh, save *me*; if thou dost indeed say, 'Come unto ME,' I come, for I long to know thee, to serve thee! But, oh! if this be presumption—sin—pardon me—hear the pleadings of her who loves and pities the motherless; and pardon, oh! pardon me!"

Such was the burden of Madeline Reinhardt's first cry to Him who is never sought in vain if sought in truth. No matter how thick the veil between pleading, upraised eyes, and his; no matter how wild and dark the confusion of error and superstition in the struggling mind; no matter how black and heavy the burden of sin; no matter how feeble the cry, how weak the faith, how faint the hope. "While they are yet speaking, he will hear;" and hearing, he will answer; and answering, save and bless. "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall

find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," he says to poor weary wanderers outside the fold ; " If ye shall ask anything in my name, I WILL do it," to the happy found ones within it. To each and to all, " Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

After that day, Madeline never wholly lost her faith in the love and goodness of her unknown Saviour, though she dared not speak of it even to Friedel lest she should be persuaded into deeming it an error. But though this blind, feeble trust, shone over her darkened life like one bright star through a captive's narrow casement, like the latter it could but cheer—could but bear testimony that the open heaven was bright with many such to those who walked beneath it—it could not give light. For the blessed Jesus was to her indeed an *unknown* Saviour ; the sweet records of his lovely life, the tender words of grace and love that fell from his holy lips " in the days of his flesh," were alike unknown to her. The vague impression she retained of the one gospel sermon she had heard, her mother's last testimony, and the story of love, as well as anguish, which her crucifix now told her, were all the light she had. And though the " bright and morning star " shone into her soul's dark prison through that one opening, not a fetter was off, not a bolt was withdrawn. Indeed, now that she sought to serve and praise him, she first felt their weight.

From Max and Friedel, as well as from Gerold von Knonau, she sometimes heard things that startled and perplexed her. Everywhere, it seemed, men were rising against the old, time-honoured doctrine of Rome, impugning its truth, contesting its dogmas, criticising its creed. Even in their own city of Zurich, Oswald Myconius, the master of the cathedral school, was openly teaching that the Holy Scriptures should alone be taken as the rule of faith ; and that if pope or emperor gave commands contrary to their precepts, obedience was due to God alone, who was above both. Max, with his usual impulsive vehemence, strongly declared his full conviction that the new doc-

trines were destined to bring in a new era of truth and liberty ; but the slower and more thoughtful Friedel looked grave and perplexed, and spoke little. From the ardent, clear-minded Gerold, Madeline learned most. He did not share Friedel's scruples ; he spoke with simple earnestness, mingled with reverence and hope, of those Holy Scriptures which had hitherto been so jealously guarded by priestly usurpation ; and words he quoted from his master's Greek Testament, to which at times he had access, thrilled Madeline with their sweetness and power. But she could not bring herself to acknowledge her own personal interest in the subject, and Gerold's visits were chiefly to Paul.

The appointment of Ulric Zwingle to the office of preacher in the college of canons, attached to the cathedral of Zurich, filled others besides Madeline with hope and joy. But to her it brought little help ; for her father, who had taken a leading part in the strong opposition that had been made to the election of the innovating young priest, positively forbade any member of his family to listen to his lectures or attend his sermons, branding him with the names of deceiver and heretic, and fully crediting the most injurious of the charges made against him by his enemies. Still it was impossible that some echoes of the words with which all Zurich was soon ringing should not reach every hearth.

Ulric Zwingle—or Zuinglius, as his name was generally Latinized—preached his first sermon in the cathedral of Zurich on his thirty-fifth birth-day, January 1, 1519. The church was filled to overflowing, and his hearers, with mingled feelings, heard him declare that Christ was to be the end of all his teachings. “It is to Christ,” he said, “the true Source of salvation, I wish to conduct you. His Divine Word is the only nourishment I would give to your hearts and lives.”

That day a new era began for Zurich, and through her for Switzerland. Disregarding the rage of his opponents, the fury of the monks, and the expostulations of the timid, the bold and

faithful champion of the truth at once opened the long-sealed pages of inspiration, and preached unto the wondering people the glorious gospel of the grace of God. Beginning with the first chapter of Matthew, he expounded it verse by verse from the original Greek. The astonished Zurichers, accustomed to the drowsy platitudes and incomprehensible mysticisms of ordinary preachers, flocked eagerly to listen to a man who proclaimed the highest truths in language at once eloquent and fervid and simple, in a manner that reached all classes. Fearlessly attacking all evils, alike of the individual, of the State, and of the Church, he pointed but to one great and all-sufficient remedy—the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The monks threatened, the canons murmured, his enemies jeered, but “the common people heard him gladly,” as they had heard a mightier One of old. From many a weary heart the burden was lifted, on many a darkened soul “the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in his wings,” and “there was great joy in that city.”

Suddenly, brightly the light of gospel truth broke through the clouds of error upon the hearts and homes of Zurich. Not thus had it come to him who was God’s chosen vessel to a benighted but awakening people, “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.” Varied are the ways the Lord uses to prepare his chosen instruments. Far different was the gentle, gradual, almost imperceptible progress from dawn to day in Ulric Zwingle’s soul, from the fearful conflict and mighty anguish in that Augustinian cell at Erfurt, from which Martin Luther had come forth as one “girded with strength unto the battle.”

As varied also are the materials of which those instruments are formed; but He whose mighty hand wields them to the fulfilment of his own purposes is too wise to err, and adapts each to its destined work. The calm judgment and well-balanced mind of Zwingle were as admirably suited to the

needs of the impetuous mountaineers with whom he had to deal, as the burning zeal and glowing fancy of Luther to his slower and less impressible countrymen.

And whatever the ways and materials may be, the one great principle is ever the same in all God's trainings—the killing of the flesh, the making alive of the spirit. What Rome and the Wartburg were to Luther, Einsiedeln and the plague-stricken bed were to Zwingle.

These two great reformers were alike of peasant origin. The home of Luther's childhood was the hut of a Saxon miner in the plains of Mansfield, that of Zwingle a peasant's cottage among the wild grandeur of the Tockenburg mountains. In the latter, January 1, 1484, seven weeks after the birth of Luther, Ulric Zwingle was born. His father was *amman* or bailiff of the district; his family was ancient and highly esteemed among the neighbouring mountaineers. The young Ulric was one of six sons, and his early days were spent in tending the flocks on the majestic heights of the everlasting hills which on all sides surrounded his lowly dwelling. It is possible that much of the noble independence, the loftiness of thought, the utter abhorrence of falsehood, and zeal for truth, which were such marked traits in his character, were in measure due to the influence exercised upon his precocious and susceptible mind by the sublimity and solemn grandeur of the scenes around him in those early days. And there is no doubt that the ardent patriotism which, in after years, led him too much to sink the Christian in the politician, was first kindled at the hearth of that mountain-home, where his father and the old men of the district told stirring tales of broken yokes and vanquished oppressors, of the glorious battles of olden time, of peasant heroes and royal tyrants, till the very names of Donnersbüchel, Morgarten, Laupen, Sempach, Nefels—of Ulrich and Rudolf of Erlach, of William Tell of Bürglen, of Arnold Winkelried, of Nicholas Thuet, and of others—forgotten now, but whose sound had power in those valleys such as kindred

blood and freed hearth-stones alone could give, sent the quick blood to his cheek and the fire to his eye.

And yet another influence, not of earth, but of Heaven, rested upon his youthful days. By that cottage hearth sat an aged woman, whose hoary head was a crown of glory, for it was found in the way of righteousness. At her knee often sat the bright-eyed boy, like the grandson of pious Lois, drinking in stories of other heroes and other battles, whose strength and whose victories were alike from God. Where she learned these we know not, only that she did know them, and that to her was given to plant in the heart of the future reformer that love and reverence for the pure Word of God which, by the power and guidance of the Spirit, was to lead to such stupendous results.

It was soon evident that Ulric possessed talents that pointed to other destinies than the life of a mountain shepherd. When about ten years of age his father took him to his uncle Bartholomew, Dean of Wesen; who shortly afterwards sent him to Basle, he having speedily gained all the knowledge to be acquired at Wesen. Basle, at which Pius II. had established a university in 1460, had already distinguished itself as the centre of the revived literature which its printing-presses had diffused far and wide. There Ulric remained three years, and thence proceeded to Berne, everywhere exciting interest by the facility with which he acquired knowledge, and affection by the amiability and vivacity of his disposition. At Berne he had a narrow escape from being entangled by the Dominican monks. Captivated with his talents and the beauty of his voice, they used every effort to win him for their order; but the *amman* of Wildhaus, hearing of the danger that threatened the son of whose future he entertained such high hopes, peremptorily ordered him to leave the city at once. He went to Vienna, and from thence he returned to Basle. There he formed a friendship with Capit and Leo Juda; and just as his vigorous and truthful mind had become disgusted with the barren sophistry of the scholastic theology, there arrived at Basle

Thomas Wittenbach of Bienne, a fellow-student of the Hebrew scholar Reuchlin, who, by placing a Hebrew grammar and dictionary in the hands of the many whose minds were simultaneously awakening in every country of Europe to ask, "What is truth?" paved the way for the reformer's footsteps. It would seem that the first seeds of gospel truth were sown in Ulric's heart by the pious and enlightened Wittenbach.

In 1506 he was called to be pastor of Glarus. At this time, though purer in morals and more upright in conduct than most ecclesiastics of his age, he was not renewed in heart, or even outwardly wholly blameless in life. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to fix upon any time in this great reformer's life as the period at which the seed of divine truth, lying dormant in his heart, put forth the first germ of life. With him it was emphatically the slow, gradual growth of the plant, rather than the sudden wakening of the sleeper.

Soon after he had received this appointment, his talents and promise attracted the attention of the ambitious and intriguing Matthew Schinner, Bishop of Sion, who had risen from a beggar-boy to be a bishop and cardinal. Anxious to attach Zwingle to the political interest of the Pope, he induced the latter to grant him an annual pension of fifty florins, to encourage him in the pursuit of literature; and twice during his pastorate of Glarus we find Zwingle, according to the custom of Swiss chaplains, accompanying his pastoral charge into the field. He had ere this begun to write against the corruptions of the age, and against the evils of foreign service, which drained Switzerland of some of her best blood, and gave her in return the vices of the countries for whose gold her sons shed it.

Various were the channels through which light poured into his mind. In particular may be mentioned the writings of Erasmus, that man of giant intellect but of little faith, of whom it may so truly be said, "He loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,"—whose part it was to open other men's minds to truths, from the consequences and application of

which he recoiled himself. One of his poems, in which the Lord Jesus complains that *all* grace is not sought from him who is the alone source of *all* good, specially struck Zwingle. "ALL! ALL!" That little word was a nail fastened in a sure place in his heart.

In 1514 Zwingle visited Basle to become personally acquainted with Erasmus, and that visit was rendered memorable as the commencement of his friendship with Oswald Myconius,* as well as by his interview with the prince of letters. There, too, he met the gentle and holy John Hausschein, better known as Ecolampadius—both names signifying "light of the house"—who was already preaching Christ in that city with acceptance and power.

Though the return of Zwingle to Glarus was speedily followed by another visit to Italy among the ranks of his fellow-citizens, in the din of camps and amid the rancour of political intrigues he still grew in knowledge; and though, at the fatal battle of Marignano, the hand that should have been devoted to the banner of the Cross, actually wielded the temporal sword, whose use was to be hereafter so fatal to him, his attention was not diverted from his true mission. What he saw there aroused him to a still keener sense of the need of reform in the Church, under whose authority so many and crying evils were not only sanctioned but fostered.

But at Glarus there was danger that politics might have absorbed Zwingle. So he was taken apart awhile. He had that to learn which God alone could teach him. In 1516 he was called to be preacher of the Chapel of Our Lady at Einsiedeln. At no place in all Switzerland, scarcely in Europe, unless at Rome itself, could the abuses of Rome have been more fully displayed in all their hideous deformity to eyes already opened. But Zwingle learned more at Einsiedeln. There, apart from the din of politics and party strife, he had repose and leisure to study deeply the only source of truth—the

* This Myconius must not be confounded with Luther's friend, Frederic.



Luther's theses placed on the church door of Wittemberg.

Holy Scriptures. He learned by heart *the whole* of the New Testament, and some parts of the Old, and transcribed with his own hand the Epistles of Paul. Thus, day by day, his whole soul became more and more pervaded with the divine truths that so exclusively occupied his mind. The pilgrims who flocked thither at all seasons brought back to their homes reports of the wonderful sermons they had heard at Einsiedeln, and studious and inquiring men from distant parts went to hear and judge for themselves "whether these things were so."

Two years passed, and the Lord's time having come, and his instrument being ready, Zwingli was called in December 1518, to the prominent post of cathedral preacher of Zurich, the most important and influential city in the cantons. Little more than a year before, Luther's theses, the salvo of truth's artillery that announced the birth of the Reformation, had been placed on the church-door of Wittemberg. And now there were few cities of note in Germany in which the light was not dawning, in which faithful pens and bold voices were not entering the lists for the coming battle.

In France, not only were there champions of the truth—Lefèvre, Farel, Briçonnet, Roussel—but the gospel had obtained a footing in the very palace of the king, the young and gallant Francis I., by the ascendancy it had gained over the heart of his beloved sister, Marguerite of Valois, remarkable alike for her piety, her talents, and her beauty.

The powerful writings of Erasmus continued to pour forth from the printing-presses of Basle; Luther's from Wittemberg.

On the papal throne sat Leo X., a prince of the house of Medici, distinguished by many of the splendid tastes and some of the virtues of his illustrious grandfather, Cosmo. Under his patronage arts and literature flourished side by side with the most debasing superstitions and corruptions. But in such an atmosphere the pure truths of Christianity could not revive. The literature of Christian Rome, reviving under the patronage of Leo X., was the literature of *Heathen* Rome.

But even in Rome, men's *minds* at least were wakening. It was morning ; the midnight gloom of the Dark Ages was past ; the dreary and death-like chill of the long hour before the dawn was broken ; the gray dawn was giving place to the coming day. It was morning at last !

CHAPTER XII.

THE POPE'S PARDONS.

"Who can forgive sins but God only!"—MARK II. 17.



It was the evening of one of the last days of February. All the Reinhardt family, except its head, were assembled in the house-room, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Gerold von Knonau entered. Scarce pausing for a word of greeting, he exclaimed excitedly,—

"He is gone! Max! Friedel! The die is cast! The Rubicon is passed! Truth's first victory is won in Zurich!"

"Scarce the first, Gerold," Friedel answered quietly; "that was gained when its fountain was opened. But is this well? is it wise?"

"Well and wise? Friedel! *thou* askest thus?"

Friedel was silent, while the troubled, perplexed look his face ever wore when the innovations on the old system were discussed came over it; but Max answered,—

"Surely it is right well and wholly wise. Didst thou see him go, Gerold? I'll warrant he growled like a dog robbed of a bone!"

"Of what are you speaking?" said Bertha, in her sharp, quick tone. "Who is gone, Gerold? This Ulric Zwingle, of whom men's mouths are so full?"

"Heaven forbid. No, Bertha. I speak of Samson, the indulgence-monger. Thou knowest already how Dean Bullinger

withstood him at Bremgarten, and rode hither post-haste to forestall his coming. Zwingle has not laboured in vain, and the council sent deputies to say Zurich had no need of him; and, that they might give no causeless offence, offered him the customary present of wine as Papal Envoy. He professed to have a special message from his Holiness the Pope, and so prevailed on the deputies to admit him. But it was all a trick; he spoke of nought but his bulls and his papers. So, after compelling him to retract his excommunication of the good Dean of Bremgarten, they have dismissed him. Zurich will not be defiled by the mummeries that were enacted at Berne."

"Thou speakest boldly, Gerold," said Bertha. "Are there then no sinners in Zurich that need the pardons he vends so cheaply?"

"No, Bertha," the boy replied gravely; "the people of Zurich have, I trust, learned that they need more than paper pardons, bought for money. They are *real* sinners, and need *real* pardons."

"But these are *real* indulgences, granted by the Pope himself." Bertha's voice was cold and measured as usual, but with a touch of bitter irony in it.

"Yes, Bertha; but what right has the Pope to grant them? How can gold or silver or copper buy pardon for sin? how can man pardon what is done against God alone? Christ alone can grant forgiveness. His blood alone can buy it. And think, Bertha, if sin was of so little moment as to be put away thus, what was the need of Christ's bitter cross? Nay, if pardon was to be won by man's desert at all, why did He die? The Holy Scriptures teach us that forgiveness is God's free gift through Christ, who alone, being very God and very man, has power to bestow it."

"Thy wisdom is beyond me, Gerold," said Bertha. "I leave these things to wiser heads."

"Would that thou couldst hear Zwingle for thyself then. It is a pity that thy father is so set against him."

"By all accounts he needs the forgiveness of which he preaches so much, for his own misdeeds. There are dark tales told of him."

"Ah ! by his enemies, yes ; but, Bertha, the Holy Scriptures tell us the Lord Christ himself was called a glutton and a wine-bibber. But Ulric Zwingli thinks himself no saint ; he looks upon himself as a poor vile sinner, saved only by Christ. It is a forgiveness needed and found by himself that he offers to others. Not from the Pope, but from Christ. And yet those things men say of him are untrue. All who know him bear witness to his faith, his meekness, his patience under insult and injury. The greatest crime they can truly lay to his charge is his love of music, and that is surely no great sin. But when he came to Zurich the burden of the chapter's charge was money, money ; the sum of his teaching is Christ, Christ. And the two things clash."

"He has a warm champion in thee at least, Gerold," said Max, laughing ; and the conversation was changed by the entrance of Herr Reinhardt. Gerold hastened home, and the family sat down to their evening meal.

The matter of indulgences formed a much less important feature in the Swiss than in the German Reformation ; the Papal authority had never been so absolute in Switzerland, and this was not the first time the high-spirited mountaineers had resisted its encroachments. The impious absurdities that had attended Samson's progress through the country, and which had been especially flagrant at Berne, were no less striking than those which fanned the spark of holy indignation into a flame in Luther's breast, and at a time when men's minds were almost universally stirred within them, could scarcely fail to frustrate their own end. In Zurich, Zwingli preached with great zeal and vigour against them, and the result was what Gerold had described.

The evening wore on. Max and Friedel sat at the table with their books. Hans, having finished his tasks, was busily

engaged carving some pieces of wood—an occupation in which he displayed great taste, but which occasioned endless conflicts between him and Bertha, as his chips and whittlings, knives and materials, were always strewed in the most distracting manner on her polished tables and chairs. Little Clare flitted about from one to the other; Bertha sat at the table knitting, Herr Reinhardt in his great arm-chair; Paul lay on his couch, with Madeline beside him. By the latter's side stood a small table bearing a carefully shaded lamp; but her embroidery lay upon her knee, and though from time to time she took it up and drew a few stitches with listless fingers, it soon dropped again. Her head rested wearily against the high, straight back of her chair, her face was pale and thin, her soft eyes heavy and listless, and a weary, spiritless look, sat on her whole figure. She did not know it, but her father's eyes often rested anxiously upon her from under the hand that shaded his brow. Her health had been such as to alarm them all of late. She had no special ailment, but an indescribable languor had seized her, and strength and appetite had failed. This Herr Reinhardt had scarcely noticed, until Paul's physician had that day spoken to him about it, at the same time assuring him all she needed was change of air and scene, and relief from the constant sight of Paul's suffering, which was too much for her sensitive spirit.

The quiet of the group was suddenly broken by a loud knocking at the door. Max rose and opened it, returning with a man-at-arms, wearing the badge of the Ohrendorfs, who at once advanced towards Herr Reinhardt, causing Clare to utter a cry of terror, and cling to her father.

"Never fear, little maiden; I have no room for thee in my wallet," he said with grim good humour, "pretty as thou art. Nay, but by the saints, thy hair is as golden as our own fair lady's—the fairest in all Neufchâtel. Wilt thou not give me a lock to test it?" and to her great indignation, he seized one of her shining curls, and made as though he would have severed it with his halberd.

"How now, my good fellow? Tell thine errand, and let the child alone.—He will not hurt thee, my sweet," said Herr Reinhardt, disengaging the silken tress from the trooper's hand.

"My errand, good sir, is to find one Hans Reinhardt, silk-merchant of Zurich, and deliver him a letter from my lord, the Baron von Ohrendorf. And if, as I suppose, thou art he, I shall have performed it thus;" and drawing a packet, tied with green silk and fastened with a seal bearing the crests of Vaudemont and Ohrendorf, from his leathern pouch, he placed it in Herr Reinhardt's extended hand.

"And thy lord, is he in Zurich?"

"By the mass, man, no. Could he have reached thee by the tongue, he had scarce troubled to use a pen. Not that *he* used it either. The good Baron's fingers are best fitted for the sword or the wine-cup. Twenty of us have been with him at the Diet of Augsburg, and on our way home he sent me hither from Basle with this letter. To-morrow I must bear back thine answer with all speed; so have it ready."

"Thou hast been at Augsburg, saidst thou?"

"Ay, have I, and seen the little monk, Martin Luther, that is setting all the priests and bishops in the empire by the ears. The place was too hot, though; he had to skulk off by night."

"Did he fly?" said Friedel; and Max exclaimed, "Thou liest, knave. He stood firm, and silenced all who opposed him."

"The more reason he in turn should be silenced. And fit too, say I. If that tongue of his is left to wag, his Holiness the Pope must look out for fresh quarters. And they tell me thou hast his twin here—that Zurich is on the way to be as hot a nest of heretics as Wittenberg, where Luther has turned all heads. As I came in hither I met Father Samson riding out as full of wrath, I can tell you, as his chests were full of money. If his curses can hurt this good city of Zurich, you had best look out. Thou art a councillor, too, good sir; didst thou help to drive the holy man away?"

"I will take part in nought that can injure the Holy Church," said the merchant gravely, but with some embarrassment; "and it is such men as Samson, and such juggling deceptions as he has been carrying on, that make way for such as Luther and this Zwingle. It is only fools that can be duped by such follies and frauds. It is the evil practices carried on in the name of religion that have made men, who are eager to get their names into all men's lips, set to work to make a new faith, which, while professing to come from God and to be deduced from the Scriptures, is of the devil, like those that preach it."

"Ah!" said the trooper; "they do say that Luther is the fiend incarnate. I looked, but could not see the cloven foot myself. Then you do not favour the new-fangled teachings?"

"No; but neither do I favour things contrary to all reason and common sense because carried on under the pretended—for I believe it to be no more—authority of the Pope. Therefore gave I my voice this day for the expulsion of this juggling monk from our city. None the less am I opposed to the blasphemous heresies that restless, ambitious men are bringing into the Church under the pretence of their being God's truths."

The trooper's rugged but jovial face became overcast. "I thought it was only scoffers and heretics," he said, "that doubted the merit of these indulgences. But thou, it seems, art neither. If thou art right, good sir, I would that my three gold crowns were back in my pouch, and the parchment for which I exchanged them in the monk's chest."

"Ha! hast thou then been trapped? I should have thought thee too shrewd, Ludwig Schutz. And thou wert not wont to pay much heed to these things when thou and I followed thy lord's banner against the Burgundians."

"So thou hast not forgotten that. No; nor I! A trooper's life is not altogether that of a saint. But a man must do something for his soul. I have not been worse than my comrades, but there are some things of which I care not to think when I

ride alone through the forests, as I did last night. I declare I thought ;—but never mind that. We all need forgiveness ; and when I met Father Samson, and he offered to sell me an indulgence for three crowns that would set my soul all right at once, why, I thought I might do worse, and could scarce do better.”

“ Knowest thou not that if thou hadst had but one crown thou wouldst have had the same privileges granted thee. Thou hast paid a high price, my friend.”

“ Oh ! as to that, he showed me some on common paper for two farthings ; but, as he said, mine would have to stand tough wear. And truth to tell,” he added in a lower voice, “ those three crowns weighed like lead in my pouch last night in the forest, and I made up my mind to give them to some trusty priest—if such could be found—to take as an offering to Our Lady’s shrine at Einsiedeln.”

“ And thou didst tell Samson this ?”

“ Ay, I am ever too ready of speech ; and he said the good spending would outweigh the ill getting. Well, at any rate, this will weigh lighter than that cursed gold.” And he drew forth a small parchment roll from his breast.—“ Are ye scholars, young sirs ?” he continued, turning to Max and Friedel. “ If so, read this ; I would fain know if it saith what Father Samson told me.”

Friedel took the roll, and read slowly and distinctly from it : “ May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee through the merits of the Most Holy Pope. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the Most Holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions, excesses how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the Holy See ; and as far as the keys of the Holy Church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory for that account, and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the

Church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism ; so that when you die the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened unto you ; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"There !" exclaimed the trooper triumphantly, as Friedel finished reading, "is not that worth three crowns of any man's money, let alone these three of mine ? I know not what it all means, but I can make out that it promises pardon for all past sins and deliverance from purgatory, and that is all I want. A man must die some time, and sixty years or more of such rough work as mine wears out the body and blackens the soul.—But thou art not convinced," he added, as Herr Reinhardt shook his head. There was something pitiful in the mingled anxiety and bravado with which the old man-at-arms looked from him to Friedel.

"No ; if thy money had been offered to the Virgin, or to purchase the prayers of good men, they might have helped thee, but not that paper. Say thy prayers, man, and honour the saints, and do thy duty, and seek by faith and repentance to atone for the past ; but see thou trust not to it. But now thou must be weary with thy journey, and I must to thy lord's letter. To-morrow, sayst thou, thou leavest ?"

"Ay ! at daybreak ; so mind thine answer be ready. Thou knowest, of old, my lord brooks not delay."

"Well, go to thine hostelry then, and take this to drink thy good lord's health."

The man took the money, and turned toward Friedel, who still stood with the indulgence paper in his hand. "I may as well keep the thing," he said ; "at least it can do me no harm. But, somehow, I have lost my faith in it ;" and he returned it to its place in the breast of his doublet.

"Thou wouldst not go to battle with a paper sword," said

Max, laughing ; " and methinks thou wouldst find a paper pardon as poor a thing to withstand the Evil One."

Friedel had stood silent, with grave, thoughtful face, but when the trooper said, with a lightness that covered a deeper feeling, " Well, I think I had best keep to my old trade. I am no fool in that, and for the rest I must trust to my luck and the blessed saints. Forgiveness is beyond reach of my purse and my pains, I reckon,"—he replied, in a firm, clear voice: " Say not so, good Ludwig. Forgiveness is beyond the reach of none who seek it where alone it is to be found—in the grace of God in Christ. It is, indeed, beyond thy purse and thy pains. But God sells not—he *gives*. He gave his Son to die, and through that death he gives pardon to all who truly seek it. Christ alone can pardon sin."

All were startled by these words from the silent, guarded Friedel ; none more so than himself. When he spoke at all of the innovations which were being even then gradually introduced into the religion to which he clung with pious and affectionate reverence, it was with perplexity, even with pain ; but if his mind was slow to relinquish the old and to receive the new, it was none the less earnest in its pursuit of truth ; and already in the depths of his heart the seeds of gospel truth, received at Basle, and since fostered by the teachings of Oswald Myconius, were taking root downwards, though as yet they had borne no fruit upwards. So that while the impetuous and volatile Max warmly signified his adherence to the new opinions, and applauded every onward step, he seemed unmoved and unconvinced ; and, perhaps, until the actual reading of the blasphemous indulgence-paper, in which man arrogated to himself the privilege that is God's alone, he was scarcely conscious how far he had been led to coincide with the new views which he had yet made the object of so much silent thought and prayer.

" Why, that is what the Lutherans say !" exclaimed the trooper. " Well, perhaps they are right ; who knows ? But the old way is easiest, after all. Easier to buy than to beg—that is,

if you have the money. What dost thou say, little maiden? wilt thou give me thy forgiveness, or must I buy it by bringing thee a fairing next time I come to Zurich?"

"I do not want a fairing, and I have nothing to forgive; but thou shouldst not have touched my hair," said Clare with dignity. "But I know the Lord Christ will forgive thee if thou askest him. He is good, he is kind, and he loves thee."

"Nay, little maiden, not an old sinner like me."

"He does. Gerold Meyer told me some words yesterday from the Holy Book. I can't say them; but they meant that God showed how much he loved us when we were yet sinners, because he gave Christ to die for us; and these I do remember, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' If thou wantest pardon for ever so many sins, ask him to forgive and and save thee! He will; he loves thee." And in her earnestness she went up to the soldier and laid her little hand on his.

"Clare, Clare," said her father sharply, "what art thou talking of? If Gerold Meyer brings any of Zwingle's notions to this house, he comes to it no more."

"Nay, chide her not, good sir. The words are good words. Say them again, my pretty one." And Clare repeated, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," with her blue eyes raised to the face from which she had shrunk before.

"Thanks, thanks; remember old Ludwig Schutz in thy prayers. The Lord Christ may hear them—but old Ludwig's! that is another matter." And laying his hand on the bright head for a moment, with something very like a tear glittering in his eye, he abruptly wished good night, and left the room.

"Clare," said her father, "what is this that Gerold Meyer has been telling thee? Remember I will have none of Luther's or Zwingle's teachings here," and he glanced meaningly at Friedel.

"Ah, be not angry, father dear. Those are the words Gerold told me, and they are good—they are true. Why, father, they are from God's Book!"

"Yes, my child; but God's Book is great and deep, and only meant for those who are wise and learned. Ignorant people make dreadful mistakes when they read it."

"Do they? Ah, but this is so plain! A little child like me can understand that. And it makes me love the Lord Christ so much more than I did when I thought he only loved good people and saints. I had been naughty yesterday when Gerold came, and Bertha was angry; and I was crying, because I thought the Lord Christ would be angry too. But when I told Gerold—he is always so kind, thou knowest—how I feared the Lord Christ would not love such a naughty girl any more, he said, 'He did not love us because we were good, but because he himself was so kind and so full of love, and we so poor, and weak, and helpless, but that he wanted to make us good.' And then he told me those words. I liked them, and I thought I understood them. Because a sinner is a naughty, wicked person, and I had been a naughty, wicked child; and if the Lord Jesus Christ came to save sinners, it must mean that he came to save *me*, mustn't it? When that strange old man took hold of my hair, I was very angry with him; but when he seemed so disappointed and sorry about the paper he had given so much money for being good for nothing, I felt sorry too, and thought it was a pity he should not know the Lord Jesus Christ was so good and willing to forgive. So I could not help telling him. Thou art not angry with thy little Clare, father dear?" She looked anxiously into the grave-set face that was rarely stern for her.

"Not angry, my child, surely not; but I would rather hear thee talk of thy sports and thy pets. These are no things to fill a child's mind. But now I must read the baron's letter; bring it hither, and then hie thee to thy bed, my flower, my sweet one—it is late. There, kiss me—no more talk to-night, thy little tongue has done its part. Madeline, give me thy lamp." And, drawing his heavy chair closer to the table, he broke the seal.

The light of the lamp fell full upon Paul's face from its new position, his father having removed the shade to obtain clearer light. Sadly changed was that face even from the day on which we last looked on it. The complexion had faded to one even, leaden tint; the full broad brow, and great dark eyes, seemed more than ever disproportionate to the small, finely-cut features, and the former was deeply furrowed with wrinkles brought there by a perpetual frown. The features themselves seemed to have lost their beauty; they were pinched, drawn, and sharpened, and overshadowed with an expression at once pitiful to see and impossible to describe,—so peevish, so sullen, so utterly hopeless.

It was at once a relief and a pain to turn from contemplating Paul, to the twin-brothers as they sat side by side at the table, sometimes speaking in low tones as they compared notes, sometimes deep in study. They were at once strangely alike and unlike. Both were fair, with blue eyes and light hair; but while Max's eyes were full of fun and fire, Friedel's were deep and still. Max's brow was open and full, Friedel's broader and more full of thought; the expression of Max's mouth was joyous and winning, that of Friedel's decided, yet sensitive and sweet.

It seemed as if Paul felt the contrast between them and himself, for he lay with his dark, mournful eyes fixed upon them, and a fire in them that was not lighted at Love's altar. Indeed, of late he had been at no pains to conceal his ill-feelings towards the brothers before whom life stretched out so fair a pathway. Poor Paul—poor, erring, weary, suffering Paul—thou knewest not that the cords which cut so deep into thy quivering flesh were twined of everlasting love, that the pierced hands that bound thee with them were those of One who suffered sharper pangs for thee, of One who *loved* thee, even thee!

At last Herr Reinhardt looked up from the letter, and said abruptly, "Madeline, this letter concerns thee!"

"*Me*, father!" exclaimed the girl in extreme astonishment

"Yes; it is from the Baron von Ohrendorf, on the part of his wife, the Lady Ermengarde; dost thou remember her?"

"Oh yes, Madeline," broke in Hans, whose patience had been sorely tested by his father's long silence, which yet he dared not break; "the lady that came to see mother, in velvet and jewels, with the beautiful little girl that had such lovely golden hair like Clare's. I remember quite well, though I was only a little boy; and the lady wanted mother to let her take you to her grand castle to be with—"

"Silence, Hans. I spoke to Madeline.—Thou wilt remember her, Madeline. And thou knowest, doubtless, that thy mother was as a sister to her in their youth at the Castle of Vaudemont."

"Was she?" cried the irrepressible Hans. "Then how did she come to marry a burgher? Ladies in castles wear pearls, and—"

"Silence, Hans," thundered his father; "go to thy bed at once. Dost hear me, sirrah?"

Poor Hans was obliged to obey at once. Indeed, he had already presumed most unwontedly; the torment of the household, he yet held his father in extreme awe, and rarely presumed on any pranks in his presence.

"I do remember her, father," said Madeline.

"And she thee, it seems. This letter contains an urgent request that I will spare thee to her for a few months, and pleads a promise of thy mother to do so when thou shouldst be old enough. Knowest thou aught of this?"

"Yes," stammered Madeline, bewildered and surprised; "at least, I know the Lady Ermengarde much wished my mother to let me return with her to Vaudemont. The Lady Muriel, too, pleaded hard; and my mother said I was too young. But that must be four—five years ago."

"Well, it seems the Lady Muriel is pining for the companionship of her brother, the young Count Raymond, who is away at some university or other, and has set her heart on having thee with her this coming summer. What sayest thou?"

"I? Oh, father!"

"Yes; there might be a worse thing for thee. Thou art pale. Life has been hard on thee of late. And about a week hence I must go to Basle on some matters of business. The Baron will send thee an escort thence, he says, and thou mightest accompany thine Uncle Andrew on his way hither in the autumn. For thy mother's sake, the good Lady Ermengarde will love and be tender to thee. The Baron will protect thee for mine. I had thought to leave thee a while with thine Aunt Katterin at Basle; but she and thine Uncle Andrew are alike bewitched with this doctrine fever."

"But, father, I cannot leave you all. And Paul, oh, I cannot leave him!"

"Paul has shown thee often how little he prizes thy devotion; besides, thou must not sacrifice thyself entirely for him."

Paul took no notice, and when his father appealed to him, only answered pettishly, "It can make little difference to me who goes or stays. I would fain be counted but the log that I am. And I at least would not have another death at my door."

"Oh, Paul, Paul!" moaned Madeline; and his father said, half sternly, half sadly, "I well know it is useless to combat thy morbid fancies, Paul. Would that thou hadst a better spirit, my poor boy."

Nothing irritated Paul more than pity, so he impatiently flung aside the hand Madeline had timidly laid on his, and turned his head away, thus refusing all further share in the conversation, while Madeline wept so bitterly that her father sent her away while he talked over the matter with Bertha and the twins.

Herr Reinhardt was most unwilling to refuse any request of the Baron von Ohrendorf. More than forty years before, when he was a mere stripling and the Baron a young man, he had fought under the latter's banner against Charles the Bold of Burgundy. His father and eldest brother were among the ill-fated garrison of Granson. After its tardy capitulation upon

honourable terms, they shared the fate of hundreds of their comrades, being stripped, dragged by cords through the lake, and hung upon trees round it. This base violation of truth and honour by the insolent victors roused the hearts of the Swiss, among them that of Hans Reinhardt. Leaving his ordinary occupations, he seized armour and broadsword, and enlisting under the banner of young Wolfgang von Ohrendorf, saw his country and his kinsmen revenged at Granson and at Morat. At the latter furious battle, in which 15,000 Burgundians fell before the arms of the confederates, and the camp, ducal dress, and diamonds of the Duke were abandoned to them in his enforced flight, the young Baron, who had shown special marks of favour to the mercer's apprentice, saved the latter's life at the risk of his own, and afterwards tended him with the greatest kindness till his wounds were healed. This mark of generous affection to a humble man-at-arms was never forgotten by Hans Reinhardt: and to the Baron he also owed the hand of Marguerite de la Neige. These obligations, of life, and of that life's dearest treasure, made him ever desirous to gratify the Baron in every way in his power; and those ways being few, rendered him the more unwilling to deny so simple and reasonable a request—one that indeed rather conferred another obligation upon him; for the post of companion or even attendant to the young lady of Ohrendorf would have been eagerly accepted by many a maiden of noble blood, such a practice being very usual in those days.

So Madeline was given no further voice in the matter, and rose next morning to the consciousness that only a few days remained to her before she entered upon a change of life as sudden as it was unexpected. But after the first shock, she could not feel wholly averse to it, though the prospect of separation from all she loved filled her with grief. She was young, and naturally could not be indifferent to the attractive prospect that opened before her. The remembrance of the Lady Ermen-garde, and of the winning loveliness of Muriel, was very pleas-

ing, and she could but feel drawn to one of whom her mother had spoken with such tender affection. Then she was weary,—very, very weary. She could but be conscious that she had lost the power of patiently bearing with Paul's varying moods and whims, and often a sharp word or petulant gesture towards him caused her hours of bitter remorse ; yet she struggled in vain against them. She was weary of sights and sounds of suffering ; weary of Bertha's cold reserve ; weary, poor child, of her own heart's pain. Gloom and depression are not youth's natural element, and Madeline's young heart yearned for a breath of free air and sunshine that could not come to her under the shadow of Paul's suffering. Yet she blamed herself that she could not feel utterly wretched at leaving him—that a thought of the new life beyond would mingle with regrets at the temporary breaking up of the old, and blushed for her selfishness, and the readiness with which she accepted freedom for herself by throwing an added burden on others.

The time was short, and head and hands had to be busy. Paul was even more wayward than usual ; but Madeline sometimes caught his eye resting upon and following her with an expression that sent a keen stab of reproach to her heart. Yet he parted from her calmly and coldly.

CHAPTER XIII.

"OUR FATHER."

"All countries are my Father's lands,—
Thy sun, thy love, doth shine on all;
We may in all lift up pure hands,
And with acceptance on thee call."—RICHARD BAXTER.



It was with mingled feelings Madeline looked forward to her stay at her Uncle Andrew's. His wife, the Frau Katterin, was a busy, managing woman, strict with her dependants, and ruling her husband and household with arbitrary sway. Once Madeline had spent a few months with her while yet a child, and she had ever looked back to that visit as the most joyless period of her life prior to her mother's death. They were a childless couple, but Madeline knew the secret of the little oaken chest in the recess in her aunt's private chamber over the porch. A small plain oaken chest—in which baby garments, yellow with age, lay folded away, with tiny shoes, and toys, and trinkets—all that was left of the one fair fragile blossom that had been early gathered by the cruel hand of Death.

Her aunt never spoke of her lost treasure, but to Madeline that little chest held the key to much that was harsh and unlovely in her aunt's character. Had the little Ella's feet pattered gaily through the gloomy old house, had not the opening made for the outflow of all kindly feelings been turned into a festering wound, she might have learned that there were things

in life worth more than well-filled store-closets and piled-up linen-chests, and spotless chairs and tables—might have seen that young hearts are not machines, moulded in one frame, and turned at will by any guiding hand. But her uncle loved to speak of the winning baby-ways of their lost darling; and the pleasantest times in that dreary visit were those when she escaped from her aunt's incessant tasks and drillings, to wander with her genial uncle along the green banks of the river, or on the wood-crowned hills round the city.

But with the lingering dread of her aunt's censorious and exacting ways a new hope contended. From time to time she had heard her brothers say that both husband and wife had warmly embraced the new doctrines, and that their house was the frequent resort of many of the learned and enlightened men who sojourned in their city. It was uncertain how long she would have to remain in Basle; they trusted to find a message from the Baron von Ohrendorf awaiting them; but Madeline hoped that it would be long enough for some of her heart's questions to be answered one way or other, for of late the conflict in her soul had increased. What at one time appeared her greatest hope and comfort, seemed at another to mock her as an illusion and upbraid her as a sin. For though at times Christ would seem to her as the loving, gracious, forgiving One of whom she had heard at Einsiedeln, at others she could only think of him as the righteous and terrible Judge, exacting rigid justice, but showing no favour, no mercy, save such as was hardly earned by self-immolation and prayers, and saintly intercession. And day by day she was learning how difficult it was to lead a holy life, how hard to do such things as alone could be pleasing to him.

Her father only remained three days at Basle, during which he was almost exclusively occupied with business. The parting from him revived all Madeline's home-sickness; and when the little packets of remembrance she sent to each had been tied up, the last fond messages delivered, her father's last embrace

received, and she stood watching his portly figure as it passed down the unfamiliar street, her heart sank within her, and she felt alone and desolate. But her aunt, who thought, perhaps not altogether wrongly, that occupation was a sure cure for all ailments, mental and bodily, called her to take part in some household business, and afterwards gave her no leisure for unwholesome brooding.

She was little changed, this busy, bustling aunt; her house was still as constant a scene of activity and industry, her rule and supervision of her maidens as strict, her manner as quick and decided, her adherence to and expression of her own opinions as stanch and unflinching, as of old. More than one long argument, maintained and defended with equal heat on either side, had Madeline listened to between her and her father, with regard to the "new gospel," as it was called. In those days, when the bonds of conventionality, soft as silk, but strong as iron, had not regulated social intercourse as they have in our own, people were apt to speak strongly, and to choose, not words that would wound least and set forth their opinions in the light most pleasing to their opponents, but those that gave most decided and forcible expression to their views. Indeed, to do otherwise would have appeared, from their point of view, a base and cowardly concealment of their colours. Thus it was that many of the noble men who did battle for the truth of God, made use of language in its defence that seems to us violent, and even scurrilous. But before we condemn them we should remember that the thoughts and habits of their age were wholly different from those of our own. The pure jewel of truth recently dragged from the mire was worth every effort of their lives to defend, every power of their minds to uphold. And that they gave these nobly, faithfully, we know. That they did so in the strong, vigorous, unpolished fashion of a strong, vigorous, unpolished age, should surely not be allowed to detract from the reverence we owe them, and the admiration we should feel for their holy boldness in an age whose mournful

characteristics of half-heartedness, expediency, and self-pleasing under the specious mask of toleration and Christian charity, are surely no less at variance with the precepts of inspiration. Their burning zeal for truth cries aloud against the lukewarmness of our day. And the Christ for whose honour they fought has spoken these words from his golden throne: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

The Frau Katterin Reinhardt had embraced the evangelical doctrines that had already taken deep root in Basle under the teachings of Erasmus, Œcolampadius, Bunzli, Capit, and others, with all the strength and decision of her strong decided character—her husband with all the childlike simplicity of his. But controversy is no food for a burdened conscience or an awakened soul, and Madeline only gained added perplexity and confusion by that carried on between her aunt and father. Her aunt was specially indignant at what she styled her brother-in-law's bigotry and tyranny in preventing his household from attending the powerful ministry of Zwingle, and before he left vainly endeavoured to extort from him a promise to withdraw this prohibition. Herr Reinhardt was quite her match in resolution and persistence.

The evening after her father's departure, Madeline took up a book that lay on the window-seat of the room in which the family ordinarily sat. Her aunt was busied apportioning spinning tasks to the three maidens whose household labours were finished, and Madeline's mind reverted to the dear ones far away, from whom she already seemed to have been so long separated. She felt lonely and sorrowful there, among her kindred, and in her own sphere. How would it be in a life whose every detail would be strange to her, among utter strangers, to whom she would be but the simple burgher maiden—nothing more? Tears gathered in her eyes, and her breast heaved; but twice already that day had her aunt sharply

reproved her for letting morbid repining get the better of her when God's mercies were thick around her path, and she resolutely repressed the rising emotion till night and the solitude of her own room should enable her to indulge it unchidden. Listlessly, aimlessly, she opened the book; it was evidently one much used, and fell open to one place in particular. Surprised to find it was in German—as yet a most unusual thing—she began to read where her eyes first fell.

"Our Father! Among all the names of God, there is none that inclines more towards him than the name of *Father*. We should not have so much happiness and consolation in calling him Lord, or God, or Judge. By this name of Father his bowels of compassion are moved; for there is no voice more lovely, or touching, than that of a child to its father."

"Our Father—our Father," Madeline murmured. "God our Father. Can it be? '*Pater noster*!' Yes; I see. But I never felt before what those words meant. *Father!* that means love, protection, care, kindness, tenderness. *Our Father!* No stranger parent, who, for his own loved ones' sakes, might help and pity us, as the father did that crippled boy in the boat on the Limmat the other day, from a thought of his own poor Paul, but *our* Father, our own. God our Father;—then he must love us. Our father is grave and stern, not given to caresses and tender words, like some; but he loves us, he cares for us, he has our good at heart. We know it, we feel it. Is God a Father in this sense? '*Pater noster, Pater noster;*' how often I have repeated the words, and never thought they meant so much. The cold, stiff Latin, is so different from our own familiar words. I wonder why we may not have our services and prayers in German? '*Pater noster*' never stirred my heart as '*Our Father*' does. But I will read more; this must be right, because it is just the plain meaning of one of the Church's two great prayers."

But as she turned to the beginning of the book, she started to see on its title-page the name of MARTIN LUTHER.

Only for a moment ; her mother's words, " It is no heresy, but God's truth, and must prevail," came to her mind, as they had often done before, when some violent denunciation of the heretical tendencies of Zwingle had alarmed her, and brought back the settled conviction that they were true. She had often heard the name of Luther coupled with that of Zwingle, and knew that in all points they were said to preach and teach the same doctrine. It was so then ; alas, for the barrier raised in after-years between those two great fervid hearts !

The opportunity for which she had panted was in her grasp ; and after reading the inscription on the title-page, " Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple and Ignorant Laymen, by Dr. Martin Luther," she eagerly turned again to the page she had commenced.

" Qui es in coelis,—*Who art in heaven.* He who confesses that he has a Father in heaven owns himself to be, as it were, an orphan on the earth. Hence his heart feels an ardent desire, like that of a child living out of its father's country, among strangers, in wretchedness and sorrow. It is as if he said, ' Alas, my Father, thou art in heaven, and I, thy miserable child, am on the earth, far from thee, in all sorts of dangers, necessities, and sorrows.' "

The words touched an answering chord in Madeline's heart. Orphaned and lonely she had felt already ; soon she was likely to feel still more so ; but God, the good God, as she had often heard him vaguely called, was everywhere—as near to her at Basle, in Neufchâtel, as in Zurich. As near, perhaps in one sense nearer. For if indeed He owned and accepted the name of *Father*, how surely must his heart answer to the cry of a desolate, lonely, sorrowful child of earth—far from him indeed, and full of need and grief. How a loving parent's heart responded to the faintest moan of a suffering child, she knew well, even if that child were ungrateful, peevish, exacting. A sweet sense of trust, of rest, fell upon her heart, as, leaning her brow against the glass, while her tears fell thick and fast, she

murmured again and again the words, so familiar, and yet so full of new sweet meaning, "Our Father! our Father!" No words of prayer came from her lips; perhaps she was not conscious of praying at all. But He who reads "the heart's unspoken language," doubtless comprehended hers that hour.

The golden evening light gave place to twilight shadows, yet still Madeline sat clasping the book which had brought her so sweet a "word in season," and lost in happy, wondering thought. She was roused at last by a hand laid gently on her shoulder; and looking up, she saw her uncle beside her. "Weeping," he said tenderly, "my poor little Madeline! Still the same tender-hearted little one." Then, as his eye fell on the book she held, "Thou art not afraid of heresy, then?"

"Dost thou think it heresy, uncle? Nay, I know thou dost not."

"No, Madeline, thank God, no heresy, but God's truth. O my child, would that it might teach thee all it has taught me!"

"What has it taught thee, uncle? Wilt thou not tell me? When my aunt and my father have talked together, thou hast said little; but thy words, few as they have been, have sent many a gleam of light and hope into my heart. And oh, Uncle Andrew, I have needed, I do need both, sorely."

"My child, if thou needest light, Christ is the Light of the world; if thou needest hope, there is none out of Christ; if thou needest salvation, it is found in Christ alone. I am, as thou knowest, Madeline, a man of few words and little wisdom. Others might tell thee these things better than I; but I can tell thee, child, of an old broken-down man—a man whose life had been spent in and for the world, whose hopes and joys were all earthly; who had taken God's good gifts, and used them, and sometimes abused them, with never a thought of the Giver; who thought to buy pardon and salvation with the gold that was not his, but his Maker's—to make of other men's merits and prayers a cloak to cover his guilty soul, and to wash out the deep stains of a long sinful life with empty forms,

and vain observances, and human ordinances. He thought to do this ; but the God whom he knew so little showed him a better way. He was old and feeble, and sometimes Death's footsteps seemed very near, and his sin lay heavy, heavy at his heart. The God of whom he had thought so little became very real ; the sin of which he had made so little account, he then felt to be very real ;—death was real, judgment was real, eternity was real. Behind him lay a long wasted life, before him a terrible unknown future. His heart failed, his hope failed ; those of whom he sought counsel had none which met his case. His wound was too deep for ordinary remedies,—for human balms,—and they knew no other.

"Then, then, Madeline, God came to him with the offer of a free salvation, a salvation that was not bought, not earned, but given ; a salvation that was not for the righteous, but for sinners ; a salvation not for some, but for all ; not wrought out by weak, sinful, failing men, but won long, long ago, by a divine, sinless, almighty, and all-sufficient Saviour.

"Then he learned that God loved him, that God had given his Son to die for him, that he was willing even then to save him and to bless him *freely*.

"He believed it ; he gave up all his own efforts and strivings, all his old thoughts and opinions, and cast himself entirely upon Christ's merits and Christ's love. And he found him enough for every need, as all will who trust him ALONE. This I can tell thee, Madeline. O my child, thou art happy to learn this in the morning of thy life !"

"But how am I to learn it, uncle ?"

"Thy Father in heaven will teach thee, child."

"Father in heaven ! ah ! that was what I had been reading when thou camest. It was at that I wept. I was feeling lonely and sad. I long for the dear ones at home so sorely, oh, so sorely ; and it was sweet to think the great God was a *Father*. And it must be true, for the Church teaches us to say 'Pater noster.' But, uncle, when they speak of the Holy Church and

the Holy Sacraments so lightly, sometimes so contemptuously, it frightens me."

"And others besides thee, my child. We are coming to troublous times ; but as the Lord Christ walked on the troubled waters of the Galilean lake, and stretched out his gracious helping hand to his poor sinking servant, so will he to those tossed about in the rough waters of conflict and controversy. Ah, Madeline, when thou dost feel the waves rising high around thee, when thy fears overwhelm and thy faith fails thee, doubt not that if thou criest, in utter self-abandonment, ' Lord, save me ! ' the same ear will be open to thy voice, the same ready hand outstretched to thee, even *thee*."

"Uncle, I have tried to believe this, since—since the dear mother died, but it seems too good—too wonderful to be true."

"If we believe *that*, may we not well believe the rest?" he said, pointing to a picture of the crucifixion that hung in the room, into which lights had just been brought ; and Madeline was answered.

A few days after her first conversation with her Uncle Andrew, he was seized with a severe fit of the gout, a complaint to which he was subject, and which often threatened to overpower his feeble strength. This attack was a violent one, confining him to his bed for some days, to his chamber for the rest of Madeline's stay. Very sweet and profitable to her were the hours spent at his side ; the timid hopes, and fears, and desires, that she shrank from expressing to her aunt, were freely poured forth to him. With the simple, unquestioning, confiding trust of a child, he had received the truth as it is in Jesus ; and the girl's thirsty soul drank in from his lips the sweet assurance that not only was the Saviour gracious, loving, faithful, but that he was *all* for her before God, all that a sinner could possibly need for time and for eternity.

When she spoke of things that perplexed her, his answer ever was, "Leave them all, my child, leave them to *him*. He is

light, he is love, he is truth ; he has answered for all our sins on the cross ; he himself answers all our perplexities now."

It was a great comfort to Madeline to dwell on the eventful visit to Einsiedeln, on her mother's last words, with those who could so fully comprehend them ; for even her aunt, stern and exacting as she still was, had won her full confidence on this point, by the true sympathy she showed when she first heard how the love of Christ had met the weary pilgrim of life with such a fulness of rest and peace.

And one little incident touched her deeply, and helped to draw out her heart towards her aunt. Going one day with her into the private room, she had said, pointing to the little chest, and in explanation of something that had previously passed : " I have not forgotten my darling, Madeline ; but since I have known that God is love, and that Christ is so full a Saviour, I have felt I could leave her to him. She is safe and blessed ; and I know I shall meet her one day, not through my own poor prayers and efforts, but through his merits. And I think what he sees here is more pleasing to him than useless gifts to shrines and altars ;" and looking in, as she opened the lid, Madeline saw it filled with little garments, coarse, but new and warm.

There were tears in the usually sharp eyes, as the long bereaved mother continued : " Yes ; to feed and clothe hungry and cold little ones, and to help the sick and needy, is a better return, poor as it is, for his love, than to repeat long meaningless prayers, and heap the shrine of a lost idol with precious things that are nothing to him, nothing compared to the faintest pulse of faith and love in the poor needy heart of a repentant sinner."

This was Madeline's first lesson in the faith that worketh by *love*, not out of slavish fear, or calculating selfishness, or cold duty, but out of love, grateful love, constrained by that mighty love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE RIVER-MEADOWS.

" My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred ;
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard."—WORDSWORTH.



THE Baron von Ohrendorf's arrival at Basle was delayed more than a fortnight beyond the appointed time ; but as her uncle continued feeble and suffering, Madeline's great wish to enjoy once more her favourite walk by the river, cherished with all the fondness of a memory of childhood, seemed little likely to be realized. But one bright afternoon a great longing to breathe the free fresh air of the river-meadows, and gaze upon the dancing waters she so well remembered, took possession of her ; and her aunt, noticing her wistful looks through the casement of her uncle's chamber, bade her go and take a long walk with Hertha Kauffmann—a young girl who had taken a great fancy to Madeline—only charging her to be back before sundown, as the students, against whose rudeness and violence she was constantly inveighing, would then be released from their various halls, and were quite capable of causing her fright and annoyance.

Nothing loath, Madeline departed, only to find her friend from home. After a moment's hesitation, she decided to go alone rather than lose the promised pleasure. She found her

way easily through the well-known streets that led to the river which divided the town ; but when she had crossed the bridge the ground was less familiar to her, the streets narrow and intricate, and she often paused in doubt. But by carefully considering her bearings, and occasionally making an inquiry, she at last found herself in the well-remembered meadows that skirted the river.

For a time every sense was absorbed in keen enjoyment of the present : all was so bright and beautiful and joyous—from the green waving grass in which her feet were buried, to the deep blue heavens, dappled with cloudlets of brilliant whiteness. Behind her, in its amphitheatre of wooded hills, with their dark pines contrasting strongly here and there with the delicate tints of budding beeches and sycamores, lay the quaint old city, with its spires and roof-trees bathed in living light ; before her stretched a broad tract of fertile land, mingled with rich woods and gleaming waters ; on the horizon the snow-clad peaks of the distant Alps rose like rocks of pearl ; and at her feet swept the dancing, sparkling waters of the rapid rushing Rhine, mirroring the azure sky and flashing back the sunbeams. The strong, soft breeze, wafted to her the fragrant odours of early spring, the glad songs of rejoicing birds, and ever and anon the faint, subdued echoes of the busy city life. And in all this brightness, and beauty, and joy she had learned to recognize the work of a Father's hand, the gift of a Father's heart.

But she had not regained her old strength, and a feeling of weariness induced her to look round for a place of rest. With a thrill of recollection she saw a few yards before her a huge lichen-covered rock, standing like a sentinel where the river made a sudden curve. Turning from the path, she descended the sloping bank to the pebbly margin of the stream, and passing round the base of the rock, sat down upon a ledge that formed a natural seat. Many an hour had she sat there with her kind uncle, listening to the stories of his early days, and of

the strange things he had seen on his journeys to and from Venice ; and, in return, pouring out her simple confidences, and beguiling the time with many a childish sport.

And now, as she sat there alone, these old memories came back, wakening it may be to the low, soft sound of the sweeping waters, flowing on, on, ever onwards, with the same swift-rushing sound. And then arose in Madeline's heart thoughts of another river—that dark river whose swelling tide had borne away with it her mother's precious life. She was tired in body, and her sensitive mind had been overwrought with unwonted exhilaration. With the swift recollection that the last time she had sat there was the eve of her departure for home after her last visit, all the beauty of the bright landscape before her was blurred and blotted out with tears, her head sunk upon her hands, and she wept bitterly and long—for the dead and for the living. A wave of home-sickness swept over her with a thought of that green grave in the cathedral cemetery at Zurich—of the dear faces and beloved voices in the old home, especially of that pale, wasted one over whose every change she had so long kept mournful watch.

But at last the thought that had brightened her pleasure that evening shed a healing ray on her grief—a Father in heaven. Softly she murmured again and again : “ Father, my Father, in heaven—yet loving me, pitying me ; with me on earth, here and everywhere. And if with me, with them. Father, O Father in heaven, teach thy poor, weak, ~~lonely~~ child to know thee, to trust thee.”

With this cry the bitterness passed, and she raised her head to a startled consciousness that the sun was already low, fast nearing the dark, pine-clad western hills. Springing up, she hastily regained the footpath, and retraced her steps towards the town. But, hurried and preoccupied, she did not notice that she left the river-side too soon, turning up a path that branched off towards the city, but leading in a wrong direction. A few yards up this path she encountered two young men in

the garb of students, whose rude stare and bantering salutation alarmed her, and recalled too late her aunt's admonition. They passed, however, without molesting her further, and she hurried on without discovering her mistake.

But at last she paused and looked anxiously around her, and saw to her dismay that she was further from the city than when she left the river-side, and that the path she had taken was leading her directly and unavoidably straight across a large field which was set apart for the various athletic pastimes of the youth of the town, and which was at that time filled with noisy and boisterous groups of students. Looking back, she saw the two young men who had passed her sauntering slowly towards her, and the sound of their coarse jests and laughter already reached her ear.

To go forward or backward seemed equally impossible to the frightened girl. She dreaded to encounter the rude looks that had greeted her before; and the many tales of the insolence and violence of the students which she had heard from her aunt recurred to her. There was no time for thought, and she turned quickly aside from the path, hoping to reach the screen of a group of trees before they came up, and then strike across the open meadow into the river-path. But as she plunged through the long, damp grass with trembling haste, a voice called upon her to stop. She took no notice, but in another moment heard steps following her, and looking back in terror, saw one of the youths close behind her. Scarce knowing what she did, she began to run with all her speed; but her pursuer quickly overtook her, and throwing his arm round her, held her fast, in spite of her struggles and entreaties.

"Let thee go! Nay, my pretty one; I should scarce have troubled to catch thee had that been my purpose. Nay, struggle not; thou art my fair prisoner. Pretty maidens should not be walking alone at this time."

"I am a stranger in Basle; I have wandered from the path," said Madeline, her voice trembling with mingled indignation

and fear. "If you have one spark of true manhood in you, you will let me go. Loose me, sir!" she said, with flashing eyes, as he tightened his grasp.

But her distress only amused her tormentor.

"I will not loose thee till thou hast paid thy ransom with those rosy lips.—Here, Heinz," he called, as his companion approached; "come and judge betwixt me and this hard-hearted fair one. Here have I found her, lost and wandering and lonely, and taken her to my heart; and here she struggles like a caged eagle, instead of the gentle dove I thought her by her fair face and demure looks, and calls me coward! But I am too brave to leave an unprotected maiden to wander alone among all sorts of wild fellows."

Heinz was a mere youth; and as Madeline struggled to turn her face from her captor's hateful gaze, and to release the little hand he held with an iron grasp, she appealed to him to help her. For a moment he seemed inclined to take her part.

"Set her free, Georg," he said; "'tis shame to handle her thus roughly."

But he soon fell in with his companion's mood; and poor Madeline, overpowered with shame and terror, bursting into a flood of tears, again besought them to let her go on her way. But though her tormentor released her hands, it was only to draw her arm through his own, and pinion it closely to his side, while he declared his intention of taking her to witness the wrestling-match in the next field.

Blinded with tears, and exhausted with struggling and entreating, she was not aware of the approach of a fourth person until a powerful hand was laid on the arm which held hers, and a commanding voice said sternly,—

"What is this, sirrah? Unhand the maiden, or it will be worse for thee."

"Not for thee, Herr Count, or Baron, or whatever thou art," he answered, stepping back, without releasing his hold. "Finders owners, say I; and thou hast no call to come between me and

my coy lady-love, whom I did but chide for being late at her tryst. She is mine own, fair sir ; meddle not with what does not concern thee."

But Madeline stretched out her hands imploringly, sobbing out—"Oh no, no ! Oh, good sir, save me ; make him let me go."

In another moment the arm that held hers was seized in the stranger's strong grasp, forced to relinquish its pressure, and its owner hurled violently to the ground. Bewildered, faint, and trembling, Madeline stood as if spell-bound, while her deliverer addressed a few words of withering scorn to her cowardly tormentors, who, after making a show of resistance, slunk away. Then he turned towards her, and doffing his plumed cap, said, with a manner of respectful courtesy which at once won her confidence,—

"Lady, I grieve you should have been thus alarmed by those base fellows, though it has gained me the honour of helping you. Will you tell me wherein I can further serve you ?"

"I am no lady, sir," she said ; "only a burgher maiden. But I thank you for your timely aid ; and will thank you still further if you will show me the nearest way to the Black Gate. I am a stranger in Basle, and have missed my way," she continued, blushing as she thought how strange her position must appear at such an hour, and at a spot she now knew to be an unseemly one for an unattended maiden. "I would be at home with all speed."

She glanced round with a startled, timid look, and then raised her eyes to the young man's face as if with a mute appeal to his manhood and knightly honour for protection and comprehension. She met a promise of both in the dark eyes that rested upon her agitated face with respectful interest and admiration. With the tears still lingering on the long lashes and on the swiftly-changing cheek, with the sweet lips quivering with agitation, and the soft liquid eyes filled with timid trustfulness, she was a fair object for both. Her gray hood had fallen back

and her brown hair become loosened in the struggle ; but there was about her that air of grace, refinement, and dignity which she had inherited from her mother, which made it little wonder that the stranger found it difficult to believe she was the burgher maiden she represented herself.

"Shame, shame on the base cowards who molested you !" he said, glancing back to where the two youths stood talking to a little group of others, pointing and gesticulating. "But do not fear now ; I will see that you are annoyed no more. But the quicker we reach the city gate the better."

"If you will show me the nearest path," said Madeline, hesitating as the young man turned to accompany her.

"Pardon me ; I cannot leave you till you are fully safe. Here you are not so—alone, at least. Those churls are capable of returning ; and, believe me, a burgher maiden is as sacred to me as the noblest lady in the land."

And looking up into the frank, noble face of her deliverer, Madeline did believe it ; none the less that while leading the way quickly across the open field, and turning from time to time to assure himself that the group of wild young men—whose threatening attitude had at first menaced pursuit and further annoyance to Madeline, from which his single arm could scarcely have rescued her—had relinquished their purpose, he walked beside her in silence, asking no further questions, and only speaking to cheer and reassure her occasionally.

When they reached the broad path which led directly to the city gate, along which a few citizens were strolling, Madeline stopped, and looking up at the young noble (for that her protector was such was evidenced by his rich dress, and by the heron's plume in his cap), said,—

"Thanks, once more, noble sir, for your timely aid and protection, and for the courtesy you have shown to a lowly burgher maiden. Thanks ; and farewell !"

"Farewell !" he exclaimed. "Nay ; I leave you not here, sweet maiden."

"Sir," she answered, "let the kindly courtesy that has made you accompany me thus far induce you to leave me now. The city gate is at hand; there are sufficient citizens about to secure me from molestation until I enter it; after that I know my way homewards. I beg you, sir, to leave me." And once more she raised an appealing glance to the young noble's face—a glance in which gratitude and trust mingled with an appeal that he would not take advantage of either.

"Lady!—sweet maiden!" he said—"thou wrongest me if thou thinkest me capable of misusing thy loneliness and trust. Thou knowest not the dangers that may yet meet thee. On my knightly honour, these are all I would seek to shield thee from. Let me see thee safely in sight of thine own door, and I will not seek even to know thy name, if thou wishest to withhold it. But thou must have heard how turbulent a set are these students of Basle; and from some things I have been told, this will be a wild night with them. Already when I left the city, groups set on mischief were gathering in the streets. This day is the anniversary of the opening of the new college, and there has ever been a feud between the students of the old and new town. Nay, I would not needlessly alarm thee"—(as poor Madeline turned pale)—"it is as yet early; only I would show thee I may serve thee yet. Trust me, for no other reason would I importune thee to let me still bear thee company against thy will. Hast thou to pass into the Upper Town?"

"Into the Market Square—yes."

"Then thou hast already far to go. The bridge will doubtless be thronged. Wilt thou not trust me?"

Had she relied on her own unbiased judgment, Madeline would have gladly accepted his proffered escort; but with a thought of her aunt's certain and heavy displeasure should she so far disobey her rigid injunctions to avoid all intercourse with the many vain and forward youths of Basle as to walk through the streets in company with a stranger, and one whose rank was evidently so far above her own, she said earnestly,—

"The public streets and the lonely river-meadows are different; I can scarce lack protection in the city. I beseech you, sir, urge me not to what would be neither for my honour nor yours. A stranger noble is no companion for a burgher maiden."

"You mistake me—you misjudge me," he said gravely; "but I can say no more. May my fears be unfounded. Farewell, sweet maiden—since you are bent on speaking it here."

Raising his cap, and bowing low, he turned aside into a by-path.

CHAPTER XV.

DANGER AND DELIVERANCE.

"I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
But count the world a stranger for thy sake."—SHAKESPEARE.



THE shades of evening were fast gathering, and, tired as she was, Madeline's feet scarcely touched the ground as she sped forward, urged onward as much by thoughts of her uncle's anxiety and her aunt's displeasure as by her fears. She had scarcely entered the city before she began to realize the truth of the stranger's words, and to wish she had not so pertinaciously refused the presence she had yet felt certain would have brought her protection and safety. Groups of excited citizens were gathering here and there; students were hurrying about, armed with sticks, and with flushed eager faces; women and children were hurrying homewards. More than one rude word and look in passing awakened her terror; but all seemed too much bent on one purpose to stay to molest her. Once she glanced behind, and fancied she recognized in the distance a figure like that of the young noble, and her heart bounded with hope; but when she looked again it had disappeared.

Presently she noticed that she alone of the citizens was going towards the bridge; and on turning into the street immediately leading to it, the cause of the hoarse roar as of many voices, that had been growing more and more distinct with every step, became apparent. She found herself in the rear of a seething

mass of students and townsmen, shouting, struggling, and using their sticks and fists in their efforts to reach the bridge, on which it was too plain one of those furious and often fatal conflicts between the rival classes was going on.

Bewildered and terrified, Madeline turned to fly, when a fresh detachment of rioters poured down the street, and she found herself jostled hither and thither, and quite unable to extricate herself. Jeering words and rude looks met her at every turn ; and at last she recognized the face of her old tormentor a few paces from her. He evidently saw her, and was battling his way towards her. With a low cry of despair, she covered her face with her hands, and shrunk back into an arched doorway. But immediately a hand, which she instinctively felt was not the one whose touch she dreaded, was laid upon her arm, and looking quickly up, she saw her noble friend beside her. With an exclamation of gladness and relief—forgetting all her scruples, remembering only that in his presence there was protection and safety—she sprang forward, and clung to the arm he offered her.

“ Fear nothing,” he said ; “ trust yourself to me. You cannot pass this way. Draw your hood closely over your face ; cling closely to my arm. We must get away from here.”

But blows began to be dealt around them ; and Madeline’s protector, being recognized as a stranger and a noble, had to draw his sword in his own defence and hers. Freeing his right arm from her clasp, and winding his left firmly round her, he succeeded in keeping her next to the wall, and ultimately in forcing a passage into another and comparatively quiet street ; but not before he had received a cut on the temple from the weapon of his revengeful adversary Georg, who had followed them to the end of the street, where a thrust from the young noble’s sword placed him *hors de combat*. The latter hurried Madeline on till they reached a narrow, empty street, leading to the quay. There he paused, and releasing her, led her to the steps of one of the warehouses of which it was composed.

"Will you not rest a few minutes?" he said. "You are quite safe here. Poor child! thou art sorely terrified and worn out," he continued, unconsciously, it seemed, resuming the more familiar mode of address, as Madeline sunk down weeping and trembling. "But thou art out of danger now—as safe as if thou wert in thine own house, where thou shalt be soon, if thou wilt trust me at last. Wilt thou?" he asked, in a slightly reproachful tone.

"I have double cause now," said Madeline, raising her head. And then, catching sight of his bleeding brow, she exclaimed, "Oh, you are hurt, you are wounded! and all through my perversity."

"It is nothing," he said, as he wiped away the blood that began to trickle down his face—"a mere scratch; I feel it not. But thou—thou art not hurt?"

"Oh no, thanks to you, sir! You have twice saved me to-day, and now at such cost. How shall I thank you?"

"By forgiving me for keeping you in sight while I feigned to depart, and believing that I would not have done so against your will had I not foreseen something of this. A part of yon mad rabble poured down a side street, and ere I could make my way through, you had become mixed up in the *mêlée*. Am I pardoned? and wilt thou trust me now?"

Madeline's look answered him; and he continued:

"Then, if thou wilt let me take thee to the water-side, an old boatman, well known to me, will row thee across. The bridge will long be impassable. I will guide thee to the Market Square, or wherever thou wilt; but thou canst not ask me to leave thee to seek other adventures."

"It has, indeed, been a day of ill-luck," said Madeline, answering his smile. "The like never happened to me before."

"I can scarce call it such. Thine ill-luck has been my good fortune, as without it I had not had the pleasure of helping thee. But now, may I not know by what name I may think of thee?"

"My name is Madeline."

"Madeline——"

He paused, as if expecting her to add her other name ; but as she did not do so, he continued :

"Well, then, sweet Madeline, if thou art rested, and wilt follow my guidance, it were as well to put the river between us and those who may further annoy thee. The sounds of the fray draw nearer."

"Yes," said Madeline, rising hurriedly, "and you might be wounded again. Was—was that man killed?" she asked anxiously.

"Which?—the villain that dared to insult thee? No, not he ; only disabled from mischief for a few days. Nay, fear not ; there is little chance of any passing this way, and a few steps will bring us now to old Klaus's hut."

Almost as he spoke they came to a boatman's hut at the corner of the quay, before which an old woman sat knitting. She apparently recognized Madeline's deliverer, and insisted on dragging him into the hut while she bound up his wound. As she was perfectly deaf, explanations were useless, but at Madeline's earnest request he allowed her to do so ; and having at length been made to comprehend that it was her husband with his boat he was seeking, she went in search of him.

The old man soon appeared, and in a few moments they stood on the other side of the river. It was evident that the fight was still going on, and that the usual thoroughfares were blocked up for some distance upon that side also ; it was already dark, and Madeline could not refuse the young noble's escort through the narrow streets she knew so little. Carefully he guided her among the various obstacles that strewed the lading wharf on which they had landed, and through the dark streets into which they next passed, speaking little, but ever preserving the same gentle courtesy.

As they reached the open street, Madeline's heart began to sink at the thought of her aunt's displeasure ; and with a fore-

boding that in her haste she might be discourteous to the noble stranger who had done her such good service, she again began to express her thanks and gratitude, just as they reached the house of Hertha Kauffmann, from which she had started on the expedition that was destined to be so full of adventure.

At the open door stood her aunt, with the old serving-man, Anton. Her aunt was speaking in accents of alarm and distress ; and Madeline caught the words, " God have mercy upon the poor child, and send her protection, if she has, as I fear, fallen into the hands of those wild youths !"

" Dear aunt, He has !" Madeline exclaimed, as she threw herself upon her neck, and burst into tears of mingled relief, fatigue, and excitement ; while her protector came forward, and explained the circumstances under which he had met her.

As he finished speaking, Anton raised his lantern and let its rays fall upon his stately figure, at sight of which the Frau Katterin uttered an exclamation of dismay.

" Our thanks are due to you for your services, sir," she said coldly ; " but I regret that my niece's imprudence and thoughtlessness should have thrown her into company so little suited to her age and station. Had she heeded my words, she had neither been subject to the insults of rude students nor to the protection of a stranger noble ; one, to my thinking, as objectionable as the other."

" Oh, Aunt Katterin !" exclaimed Madeline indignantly.

But her aunt continued, with increased asperity : " By your own account, sir, you have acted the part of a true knight. I trust you will prove yourself such—in this case, at least. You are no stranger to me, sir ; though that you were such to my niece, her trusting herself in your hands proves. See that you do not seek to make it otherwise." And, with a stiff courtesy, she drew Madeline within the house, and bade Anton close the door, before the former could recover from her bewilderment.

" Oh, Aunt Katterin, how couldst thou speak so ! Thou knowest not how kind and courteous that noble youth has

been. Had I been the Lady Muriel, he could not have treated me with greater respect, burgher maiden as he knew me to be. And in rescuing me from danger, he was hurt—wounded. Thou hast given him sorry thanks."

"Madeline," replied her aunt sternly, "the danger thou hast escaped in reaching home safely, when thy folly had brought thee into the power of Rupert von Berlach, was greater than that from which he saved thee."

"Rupert von Berlach! Aunt Katterin, that noble youth—"

"Was the Count Rupert von Berlach, Madeline. Art thou answered now?"

Madeline started. The name of that young nobleman was too notorious in Basle. Shame and sorrow had entered many a household through it: among these, one well known and honoured by her Aunt Katterin. But she could not reconcile her deliverer with what she had heard of the profligate Von Berlach, and said so.

"Ah, child!" said her aunt, "his knightly bearing and fair speeches were only a cloak it suited him to wear. Well that it did so, and that to-morrow the Baron von Ohrendorf will arrive to convey thee to Vaudemont. Had thy fair face not taken the Count's fancy, he would not have troubled himself thus, and thou wouldst have cause to rue thy folly in his importunate pursuit of thee. But come, thine uncle is sorely distressed about thee. We must hurry home."

After bidding farewell to the Kauffmann family—all of whom echoed her aunt's sentiments—they went out into the quiet street, Madeline listening in silence to her aunt's lecture on the impropriety of her conduct all the way home.

Her uncle received her with open arms; and when her aunt continued to speak angrily and reproachfully, he said gently: "Do not chide the poor child, Katterin; her terror and danger have been punishment enough. Let us rather thank the good God for his watchful care over her. And, after all, I do not see where she is to blame. She could but accept the only

protector who offered himself, and it was the one her heavenly Father chose. He saw her need, and met it ; and if it was ~~this~~ Von Berlach, it shows His watchful care over her the more." "

Worn out with fatigue and excitement, Madeline was glad to retire to rest early. A messenger had arrived from the Baron von Ohrendorf with the tidings that he hoped to reach Basle late the following day, and requesting her to be in readiness to accompany him to Vaudemont the next morning. A whirl of thought and feeling kept her long waking. Mingled with a sweet consciousness of a Father's watchful care having been over her, and gratitude for escaped dangers, was a strange sense of disappointment and pain. It is ever painful to youth to find its bright trust clouded, its pure confidence misplaced, its high ideal shattered. It was inexpressibly so to Madeline to connect the looks and tones of chivalrous courtesy which had so fully won her confidence with the base artifices of such a nature as Rupert von Berlach's—to know what had borne so fair an appearance of truth and honour to have been but hollow deception, assumed only as a means to an end.

Yet she could not forget that her deliverer had been wounded in her defence, or help regretting that he had been dismissed with such scant courtesy. Had he been all her guileless spirit deemed him, she felt he would have been henceforth her ideal of noble manhood and knightly honour. Now it must be far otherwise. She could never think of the events of the past day without a flush of shame rising to her cheek, without recalling her first lesson of suspicion and distrust. "His mien was so noble, his eye so clear and true, I could have pledged my life to his honour ; yet it was all seeming, all false ! Ah, how may truth be known !" she murmured to herself, and a few hot and very bitter tears bedewed her pillow.

The next day was spent in preparations for her journey, and in the company of her uncle. Something of what she felt was detected by him when she talked over her yesterday's adventure.

"Poor child," he said, "thou hast yet to learn how evil a world this is. I would thine experience of it were not to be cast thus early among those who are not of thine own rank. Thou art over-tender and impressible, my Madeline, like thy gentle mother; and I fear lest thy young heart may be blighted, as hers was. Forget not, if thy fair face wins thee favour and notice, to trust them not—thy lowly birth will outweigh all thy gentle worth. Thy mother's fate makes me speak thus."

But when Madeline would have asked of the latter, her aunt entered with welcome news. A friend of Friedel, coming to Basle to prosecute his studies, had been made the bearer of letters and messages from the dear home circle, and awaited her below, and she had no opportunity for further conversation with her uncle.

The Baron von Ohrendorf arrived, and took up his quarters under the hospitable roof of the Reinhardts. The real if rough kindness of his manner soon set her at her ease. And now the eve of the dreaded journey had actually arrived she found it less formidable than she had anticipated, and looked forward with timid pleasure to meeting the sister-friend of her dear mother's youth, and the sweet Lady Muriel, of whom the old Baron spoke with proud tenderness.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TROOPER AND THE INDULGENCE PAPER.

"Thou art a God of pardons."—NEHEMIAH ix. 17 (*margin*).

EARLY the next morning Madeline was on her way to Vaudemont. In spite of the strangeness and loneliness of her position, and the regret she felt at leaving the kind friends whose parting counsels and blessings rang sweetly in her ear, her young heart beat high with enjoyment and hope. It was a lovely April morning, and as she looked back on the city lying bright in the morning sunshine, in its setting of dark pine-clad hills and verdant meadows, and recalled the gray stormy evening on which she had entered it—troubled in mind, weary in body, and depressed in spirit—her heart swelled with gratitude and love. The sunshine that streamed on the fair landscape through which their road wound seemed a bright promise for the happiness of the temporary home that lay beyond it; and even should clouds gather and night close in, there were two stars whose shining would never fail—a heavenly Father's care, a forgiving Saviour's love. When she came to Basle, the first was unknown to her, the second only dimly, tremblingly perceived. Now her happy confidence in both was simple and strong.

The Baron von Ohrendorf rode on first, with a nobleman at whose castle they were to pass the night; he had given Madeline into the special charge of his trusty follower, Ludwig

Schutz, the gray-headed trooper who had been his messenger to her father at Zurich.

Well the old man discharged the trust, entertaining Madeline with many a quaint legend and story, walking at her bridle-rein at every rough or steep piece of road, and unconsciously cheering her by the attractive picture he drew of the good Lady Ermengarde, and the sweet, saintly Muriel. He spoke of her father too,—of the days in which they had fought side by side in the Burgundian campaign ; and asked with rough sympathy for the sick youth, whose worn, suffering face, had evidently left a deep impression on that rugged but kindly nature ; and for the fair, golden-haired child, who had said such sweet words to him. “ I cannot forget them,” he said ; “ they are worth to me more than the Pope’s pardon, though I keep that still—it may do good, and can do no harm. I have a short memory for such things, and never could say a Pater through aright. But those words stick fast, ‘ Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.’ If that is true, there may be hope for me.” They were passing a roadside crucifix, and after uncovering his head and saying the usual short prayer, he went on : “ I used to wonder what *that* meant. It seemed so strange One so great and terrible should suffer, as the priests say he did. But *she* said it was to save sinners.”

And Madeline from a full heart could tell him that it was even so, and show him the “ more excellent way ” which she had so recently found for herself. Drawing out the book whose gospel teachings had been so blessed to the peace of her own troubled soul, she read to him some of the passages in which the all-sufficiency of Christ’s salvation was set forth, and others which dwelt upon the fulness and freedom of his love and grace and man’s utter wretchedness and need ; while the trooper listened in silence.

At mid-day they paused to rest at an inn in a small village about a dozen miles from Basle. Madeline was treated with all the respect and consideration due to a lady of rank, and was

led by the landlady to an upper room, rough and comfortless, indeed, and not over clean, but vastly preferable to the large apartment in which all visitors were promiscuously entertained. She was standing at the window awaiting the summons to resume her journey, when a traveller rode quickly past the window into the stable-yard of the inn. Madeline's heart gave a frightened bound as she recognized in him her deliverer of the other day, and a feeling of consternation came over her as she thought of the possibility of his meeting and knowing her. To her relief their party started almost immediately, and the stranger had not entered the great inn-kitchen, through which she was obliged to pass.

For a mile or two they rode on in silence. Ludwig was grave and thoughtful, and the road steep and rugged. Madeline was timid, and the frequent slipping of the stones alarmed her so much that Ludwig dismounted from his horse and led hers. They had thus fallen a little in the rear of the rest of the party—consisting of the Baron and his friend and some dozen horsemen, who formed their united retinue—when the sound of advancing horse-hoofs caused Madeline to look round apprehensively just as the knight who had passed the inn window came in sight at a curve of the mountain road. Agitation, fear, and something of the pain she had felt before, made her sight scarcely clear as he reined up his horse in passing and courteously saluted her. But when she raised her eyes at the sound of his voice, and met the bold stare of insolent admiration with which his were fixed upon her agitated face, she felt relieved in the midst of her annoyance and alarm. The handsome face was that of a stranger, the voice one she had not heard before.

Yet the manner and words were not reassuring when he said, "I crave thy favour, sweet lady. Thou art too fair a flower to be thus lightly guarded. In yon forest lurk those whose presence may make it well for thee that the arm and sword of a true knight are at thy service:" and he

skilfully interposed his horse between Madeline and her guardian.

But before she could reply Ludwig's hand was again on her rein. "By thy leave, Sir Knight, this lady is in my charge, and within call are twelve stout knaves and the Barons von Ohrendorf and Arden. The forest outlaws will scarce dare attack so fair a force:" and as he spoke a bend in the road brought them in sight.

An evil look passed over the noble's face, but he restrained himself and continued to annoy Madeline by riding beside her and forcing her to reply to his remarks and queries, at once offensive and courteous. But when, after a few long minutes spent thus, they came upon an even piece of road, Ludwig sprang upon his horse, saying to Madeline, "We must take advantage of this, lady, and join our comrades, who are, I see, awaiting us. Thou, Sir Count, will scarce care to face the Baron von Ohrendorf!"

A red flush mounted to the stranger's brow. "What meanest thou, varlet? Thou shouldst smart for thine insolence, but for this fair lady's presence!"

"What I mean, Count Rupert von Berlach knows full well, methinks.—Come, lady!" And Madeline gladly put her horse in more rapid motion than she had hitherto ventured upon, without daring to look back, until they joined the rest of the party, with whom they needed to keep up closely till their arrival at the castle of the Count of Arden.

But this episode, unpleasant as it was, had lifted a weight from Madeline's breast. For there could be no doubt that the courteous knight of her adventure at Basle was *not* Rupert von Berlach. She might still believe in knightly honour and truth.

The Count's person and character were equally well known to Ludwig, and the personal resemblance which had at first startled and deceived her might readily account for her aunt's mistake, together with the momentary glimpse the latter had of his features in the uncertain lamp-light. It was a likeness that

could scarcely fail to strike at first, but which was speedily lost sight of in the total dissimilarity of expression, voice, and manner. Madeline could now recall with pleasure the earnest truthfulness of those dark, clear eyes, the frank expression of the manly face, the winning courtesy and kindness of voice and manner, that had won her confidence, and once more believe them to be but the natural expressions of a true and noble character. And she felt glad and thankful that the strange chance of her meeting with the true Count Rupert should have prevented her further wronging the memory of her noble and courteous protector, who must even then have been suffering from the effects of the blow received in her defence.

After this their journey was unbroken by any incident of moment. The Baron himself rode beside her the second day, but she did not find him so pleasant a companion as Ludwig, partly because she was too much in awe of him to do more than listen to whatever he was pleased to say. But as evening closed in, and he rode on in advance to the castle in which that night was to be passed, Ludwig came up to her and said, "Art thou too tired, sweet lady, to read me those good words again? Never have I heard the like, and though they are the heretic Luther's, they suit my poor soul's need."

"They are Luther's words, indeed, good Ludwig, but it is God's truth they speak."

"Thou art sure of it?" he said with a look that reminded her of the one with which he had appealed to her father about the indulgence.

"The Holy Scriptures are God's words, Ludwig, and it is from them alone Luther and others like him draw their teachings. And God's words must be true."

"It would be something to have a word that one could be sure of."

"Yes; and, Ludwig, God does not ask us to trust his word only, but his acts. He has given his Son to die for us, instead of us. He has laid on him all our sins, has punished all our

guilt in him, and for his sake forgives us fully, freely. He loved us then. He loves us now, you and me, Ludwig; for he loves *sinner*s. He gave his Son to die for *sinner*s. He wants no merit, no penance, no suffering of ours to make him forgive us. He is satisfied with Christ. And Christ in his mighty love has answered for all our sins. I can scarce see to read, but I learned last night one of the Psalms which Luther has translated into German:” and she repeated, low and clear,—

““Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.’”

“There is forgiveness with thee,” said Ludwig, when she had finished—“with *thee*.”

“Yes, Ludwig, with God—only with God. It is against him only we sin. He only can forgive. And he does forgive freely, fully, for Christ’s sake, all who cry to him out of the depths—the depths of need and sin and sorrow, from which they cry to him. No depths are too deep; for with him is mercy and *plenteous* redemption. There is no fear of the ransom falling short; for it is a royal ransom, the blood of his Son. O Ludwig! I used to think God was an exactor: I have found that he is a forgiver. I feared him as an awful, angry judge: I have found him a loving, tender Father. I thought he was hard to find and difficult to please: I know now he is love, and loves me. Ludwig, you were willing to give much money for a paper pardon. Will you not take the one God offers freely, sealed with the blood of his Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour?”

"Would I take it? nay, but the question is, Would pope and priests and saints together be strong enough to win it?" said Ludwig gravely.

"If you had rebelled against the Emperor, and sentence of death had been passed upon you, you would perhaps try to get your master the Baron, and some great friends, to intercede for you, and feel a dim, trembling hope that they might succeed. But if the Emperor himself sent this message to you in your prison-cell—'Ludwig Schutz, my son loved you, poor, worthless rebel as you were, and offered his life for you. I pitied and wished to save you. So I gave him up to the executioner in your stead. He willingly took your place; the blood of the princely victim has satisfied justice. You are free, and I forgive you. Go. Henceforth be no more a rebel, but a good and faithful subject,'—would you turn away, and say, 'I have many seeking my pardon who have influence at court; it is the old-fashioned way, and I have scraped together a little money, which I hope will help'? or, 'I cannot believe it; the Emperor is hard and stern; my offence is past forgiveness. I must take my chance'? Or would you not rather fling aside your broken chains, and rush through the unbarred door of your dungeon into the free air and sunshine? and would not your first act be to cast yourself at the feet of your gracious sovereign, overwhelmed with love and gratitude and devotion, more truly his prisoner than iron fetters and dungeon bars could make you? and would not the effect of such a pardon and such a ransom be to constrain you to devote every pulse of your heart, every power of your body, to the merciful one who had *freely* provided both?"

The old man had followed each word with eager, breathless interest, and his voice trembled with suppressed emotion as he said, "Ah! but, lady, such a thing could not be."

"Not upon earth. Not among men, at least. But, Ludwig, such a thing has been. Once the sun looked down upon such. No; he could not look down upon it. Darkness veiled the

awful, wondrous sight, when Christ died for the ungodly—gave his life to save sinners. Ludwig, what was this world but a vast prison-chamber, filled with the devil's captives—bound with his heavy fetters, not God's? What were the men and women and children upon this earth but wretched, death-doomed rebels against their King, their God? What awaited them but the terrible stroke of the sword of justice? What could save them from the wrath of an offended God?

“The *love* of that offended God. Down to the dark depths of that dungeon-world he sent his Son—his holy, spotless, well-beloved Son. For years he walked in it, a man among men, unspotted among the sinful, sharing every human pang and pain, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, turning none away. Then on the dreadful cross of Calvary he poured out his soul unto death for the transgressors. He did this not perforce, not of compulsion, but because he loved us. St. Paul says, ‘He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*,’ and every poor, helpless, wretched sinner may say the same, for ‘He came into the world to save *sinners*.’ He died for the ungodly. His own blessed lips spake the words, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance.’ He took the rebel's place, and now gives a free pardon to all who ask it. Is it a wonder that God loves us, forgives us, cares for us? The blessed Scriptures say, ‘He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also **FREELY** give us all things?’”

The tears were rolling down the old trooper's weather-beaten cheeks; but he spoke not till they came near the castle-gates. Then he said, in a low, reverent voice, “There is forgiveness with *thee*. Lord, I will trust it:” and drawing the indulgence parchment from his bosom, he cut it in pieces with his halberd, and scattered the fragments to the winds.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE BATTLEMENTS AT VAUDEMONT.

“ Could we but keep our spirits to that height,
We might be happy ; but this clay will sink
Its part immortal.”—BYRON.



THE Castle of Vaudemont stood on a spur of the Jura mountains, about a league from the town of Valangin, and two from the city and lake of Neuchâtel. It was built on the northern side of a deep gorge, to the bottom of which a stone might have been dropped from the eastern windows of the castle. It was a dark, gloomy-looking pile, constructed, as such abodes usually were, with more regard to the exigencies of war than to the requirements of domestic comfort. To the north and west the rugged sides of the rocky Juras rose almost precipitously in grim, sterile grandeur ; the eastern side looked sheer down a wholly inaccessible cliff into the depths of the ravine ; and the steep slopes to the south—up which the only road wound—were separated from the castle by a great chasm in the rock, partly natural, partly artificial, over which a drawbridge was suspended from a massive portcullis. Many a time had those green slopes been dyed another hue ; many a knightly form had found unhallowed burial in that gloomy abyss, in the old, stormy days of feud and rapine. But never had the gates of Vaudemont been opened to the foe ; never closed to the poor, the friendless, and the pilgrim. Such was its lady's boast. More than once in her

childhood had the banners of Bergen headed a bootless charge against it ; but things were somewhat altered then. For years the party war-cry had been unheard, and the hinges and chains of the old portcullis had become so stiff and rusty with disuse, that, had necessity arisen, it would have been a hard matter to have used them.

At the foot of the slope lay the miserable assemblage of huts called the village of Vaudemont, where the vassals of the good Lady Ermengarde toiled and moiled, and wore out their weary lives, in hopeless drudgery, sowing seed and reaping crops, of which their masters claimed the lion's share ; ground down, oppressed, and miserable, yet bearing all with an apathetic, despairing patience, that was supposed to be stupidity or contentment, but which was really the result of long ages of tyranny and wrong, of brutalizing ignorance and its twin-sister superstition. Twice a week the Lady Ermengarde stood at her castle-gate and distributed alms to those who came ; but she never thought to recognize in those poor, toil-worn men and women, and hungry little ones, beings of the same mould—of the same parentage as herself. It was not her fault so much as that of her training, which had taught her to look upon the peasants as on a part of the goods and chattels of her estate ; and thus while after some calamity—such as the overflowing of the stream that watered their pastures on its way to the lake, which would at times rise with the fearful rapidity of such mountain torrents, and sweep away flocks and produce in its relentless course—she was ever ready with aid in the shape of food and money, it was but from the kind of pity she would have bestowed upon one of the lower animals, mingled with the satisfaction of doing a good work for the benefit of her soul.

And hitherto it had been the same with the gentle Muriel. Occupied rather with the dreamy trances and ecstatic visions of the saintly beings whose course she longed to emulate, than with their practical labours, her dreams of sanctity tended rather to the abstraction of heart and mind from all earthly interests,

than to the seeking to share and lighten earthly burdens and sorrow ; and the conflict of these ideas with the deep feelings and throbbing pulses of her young, warm heart, had been increasing constantly the last six months. With her usual indolent procrastination, Lady Ermengarde had deferred following Raymond's advice, until, during an unexpected visit to the castle, he had renewed the subject with increased urgency and alarm, and drawn his father's attention to Muriel's pale cheeks and languid movements. The result had been the hasty summons for Madeline.

It was late in the afternoon of a stormy April day. The sun was already low, veiled from time to time with heavy folds of cloud, but every now and then breaking forth with a dazzling gleam of watery radiance, which made every bursting leaf seem as the casket of a glittering gem, and every blade of grass quiver as with countless diamonds, when the slight figure of the Lady Muriel emerged from the turret door leading to the battlements on the roof of the castle.

It was a lovely scene upon which she gazed, for the view to the south and east was as extensive and beautiful as it was uninviting on the north and west. Immediately beneath the castle, at the foot of the slope, lay the little village, its mean and wretched dwellings hidden by the budding beeches and sycamores that grew round it, with the rushing stream dancing, sparkling, and foaming in the sunbeams, as it swept proudly over its rocky bed ; and beyond the green meadows in which the cattle were grazing, the town of Vallangin, with the dark walls of its ancient castle frowning down from the rocky heights above it. Further still rose the roofs and towers of the city of Neufchâtel, and, gleaming like silver in the white sunlight, the broad waters of the beautiful lake, with its green shores dotted with pretty villages and homesteads ; and then, as far as eye could reach, mapped out with wonderful distinctness in the clear evening air, rich tracts of pasture-land, and wide forests and wooded hills, broken here and there by the gleam of waters, or

by distant town, or castle, or village. A range of dark blue mountains, above which towered the giant snow-clad peaks of the Bernese Alps, bounded the horizon ; and the glowing hues of a magnificent rainbow that spanned the sky were reflected far on hill and wood.

But the face of the young girl was sad and troubled as she advanced to the edge of one of the turrets, and throwing back the plain gray cloak which covered her rich dress, rested her fair arms on the stone battlement, and gazed intently upon the fair scene. She was beautiful with a rare and touching beauty, such as has come down to us on the all but breathing canvas of some glorious painter of old. The delicately formed oval face, with the chiselled features, and deep, serious eyes under the clear arched brows ; the small, sweet, pensive mouth ; the round smooth cheek, with its faint blush of exquisite colour ; the pure, calm brow, from which the bright hair rippled back in waves of shining gold, formed a whole of perfect loveliness. No wonder that her proudly loving brother shrank from the thought of the fair casket, in which so precious a jewel as Muriel's warm, affectionate spirit was enshrined, being shrouded and lost in the cloister's gloom, consigned to what must be to all who loved her a living death.

The hoarse murmur of the swollen torrent in the gorge beneath alone met her ear, until a little bird in a group of trees below poured forth a clear, glad, thrilling song. The sweet, rejoicing notes of that strain seemed to touch some chord in her breast, for tears gathered in her dark, mournful eyes ; and she said, as though unconsciously thinking aloud, " Can it be ? Is man the only one of his creatures whom God does not mean to be happy ? That little bird pours forth its song of love and joy from its sheltered nest ; the leaves and flowers burst forth into joyous life ; the waters dance and sparkle in the sunlight ; earth and air are full of busy, rejoicing creatures ; all nature seems to say, ' God is good ! be happy, be happy ! ' And my heart would fain answer to its voice, and answering rise, it seems

to me, in adoring gratitude to the Source of its happiness. But what makes the sunshine, the happiness of this earthly life but *love*—that idolatrous creature-love, with which God will not share the heart. And yet he made the heart ; and in the breast of the Lord Christ once throbbed a *human* heart. Can it be that love, the purest, the deepest, the strongest feeling of our nature—love that has borne and suffered, and achieved such high and holy marvels, the highest and holiest this poor sinful world has seen—is indeed sin—a hateful, impure thing, scorching the budding germs of heavenly grace, drying up its precious dews, stifling its hallowed whispers ? Loving the creature, may we not love the Creator too ?—Oh, weak, treacherous heart, be still, be still ! Maria ! Sanctissima ! Purissima ! ora pro meo !”

The sun broke forth with undimmed splendour, the hues of the iris arch deepened and glowed, the waters gleamed, and the young leaves glistened ; while from the tree the unconscious minstrel’s glad strain rose clear and free, and mingled with the dull unceasing roar of the dark torrent in the gorge ; and still the girl leant motionless against the battlement, gazing, with eyes that read deep meaning in all things, upon the fair scene. The strong breeze swept round her, blew back her gray hood, and unbinding her rich tresses from the coils of snowy pearls that bound them, tossed them like a golden veil around her, while it brought a rich crimson glow to the delicate cheek. And as she gazed, the pained, troubled look passed, and the thoughts that swept through her mind were gentle and pleasing ones, as might be supposed from the soft, sweet light, that came into her eyes, the half smile that rested upon her pensive lips.

At last her reverie was broken by the approach of an elderly woman dressed in a dark serge gown, with her iron-gray hair drawn tightly under a close-fitting black cap. Her features were rigid and sunken, the expression of her gray eyes cold and passionless, her form slight and spare.

Absorbed in her own thoughts, Muriel did not notice her ap-

proach, till she said, "Your lady mother bade me seek you, lady ; she fears the cold blast may do you an injury."

Muriel started, and the shadow came back to her face as she said, "I feel it not, Agnes. The sun has broken forth so brightly, and the scene is so fair. Look !"

"Ah, lady ! earth is fair, but heaven is fairer ; earth's jewels are bright, but heaven's crowns are set with such as wax not dim ; earth's love is strong, but heaven's love is pure ; earth's happiness is treacherous and fleeting, heaven's sure and eternal."

"Yes."

"And the choice is given us between the two—earth and heaven, sin and purity, God's love and man's. We cannot have both. God will have the whole heart, the whole life, or none."

"I know it. Yet, Agnes, as I stood here, and saw how fair He had made everything, how happy all creatures seemed—all but myself—a voice within me seemed to tell me that he could not will it so. O Agnes, may it not be possible that we are wrong in thinking he deals thus hardly with us ? For it is hardly," she continued passionately, as Agnes crossed herself with a horrified gesture, "if he made our hearts thus quick to feel, and strong to love, and deep to endure, only to bid us wrench their very life-strings asunder, or live in deadly sin. Agnes ! Agnes ! mine tells me it cannot be so !"

"God made our hearts for himself, and himself only ; every pulse of carnal love and earthly affection robs him of his own, us of his grace and favour. And what poor human love can weigh with that ? Ah ! lady, think of the blessedness of those who, forsaking all carnal delights, tread in the blessed steps which have followed the Crucified ! Think of the blessed calm, the holy rapture, the glorious visions, the power to succour and save, that have been theirs on earth ! Think of them now ! And the path they trod is open still. True, it must be trod with bleeding feet ; but what of that ?"

"All cannot be saints, Agnes—all have not a vocation,"

Muriel said. Such words were wont to kindle answering enthusiasm in her breast, but that day they fell dull and heavy on her ear.

"Not all, indeed, not all; only a favoured, blessed few. Only those in whose souls the deep, mysterious whisper, 'Follow Me,' is heard. Let those who have heard that, take heed they quench it not. It is the voice of the Crucified, echoed by the lips of the holy and saintly throughout all ages. And fearful is the judgment of those who obey it not. In time, perhaps; in eternity, certainly. Lady, you have heard it—you hear it now."

The gray, passionless face was changed, the cold eyes glowed with a strange fire, the voice was deep and thrilling in its stern enthusiasm. Muriel shrank before it. Covering her agitated face with her slight, jewelled fingers, she murmured, "God help me if I do."

"Lady, I tremble for you; you have trifled long. It is a sign of the Divine forbearance; it is not yet silenced; but oh, beware; trifle not; obey and be blessed—your rank, your beauty, your wealth—"

"Oh, I would give them all gladly, cheerfully, so I might keep the love. Agnes, thou askedst to-day how I could kneel in the chapel before that thorn-crowned image of the Lord Christ with my head filleted with jewels. I told thee then, I tell thee now, that those gems are to me worthless, compared with the things I must, perhaps, sacrifice one day—the things I sacrifice in measure each day. But my father's grief and anger, my mother's tears, my Raymond—oh, my Raymond! O Agnes, Agnes, is there no other way?"

"You know, lady, who hath spoken thus: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.' When others receive their golden crowns, would you be among the unworthy?" Muriel was silent, and Agnes con-

tinued : "Alas, lady, that you should hesitate, when you might make so rich an offering, and win such blessedness on earth, such glory hereafter ! One day I hope to find the time when my poor services can be laid at His feet ; but what can *I* offer to our Holy Church ? Only my poor wasted, worn-out body—only my prayers and my zeal. You, youth, rank, riches, beauty, and that base carnal love and pleasure that men hold so dear. That were indeed imitating Him who left heaven for us ! And who can tell what measure of grace you might attain, what blessings win, not for yourself only, but for others. These are evil days. Heresy is abroad, the snares of Satan are on every hand. Your accepted prayers, rising from the holy calm of the convent cell, would help those you love more than your fleshly love. And if I mistake not, even now the Count Raymond needs them. His feet are in slippery places."

Muriel had turned from the bright landscape, and was gazing down into the dark gorge, with her face hidden in her hands, and her elbows resting on the parapet. "But, Agnes," she said at last, "as I have told thee often, my parents will never consent ; and disobedience can scarce be a Christian duty."

"Is it disobedience to obey God rather than man, our Holy Mother the Church rather than weak, erring human parents ?"

"No ; O Agnes, would that I had thy faith, thy devotion. But the time is not yet. Thou wouldst not have me leave them yet ?"

"Not unless with my lord's consent—else the Holy Church might be robbed of her due in your dower. But I would have you fully resolved in heart. And oh, lady, dangers and temptations will but thicken."

"I know it, and I am weary of being tossed hither and thither. My spirit seems like yon troubled, turbid stream, dashed from rock to rock, shut in from light and sunshine."

"A blessed peace awaits it, lady. One day it will spread out clear and calm as yon lake, and mirror the open heaven in its depths."

Muriel mechanically followed her glance to where the lake of Neuschâtel shone like a sheet of silver, and caught sight of a party winding slowly up the sloping road to the castle. "There they are!" she exclaimed; "my father and Madeline. I must hasten to tell my mother:" and she turned to do so.

But Agnes laid her hand on her arm, and fixing her eyes solemnly upon her, said, "Lady Muriel, beware of forging fresh fetters for yourself. This stranger maiden is nothing to you now. Let her remain so. For your soul's peace I say it, sweet lady. I go to plead with the Blessed Mother to save you from this new snare."

The flush of excitement faded from Muriel's cheek, and she leant once more against the battlement, watching the travellers as they slowly wound up the path. "It is true," she murmured; "I, that am already bound with ties of earthly love so strong that it seems as if it would be death to snap them, have been eagerly anticipating the formation of a new one. I have so longed for a sister! Would it not be better to end this strife at once? I cannot—I cannot! Oh, blessed saints, Holy Mother, help me, save me!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DAISY OF THE SNOW.

"How steadfastly *she* fixed *her* eyes upon me!
Her dark eyes shining through forgotten tears;
Then stretched *her* little arms, and called me mother."—COUNT BASIL.



ALF an hour afterwards, the tramp of horses' feet echoed in the court of the castle, and Madeline was lifted from her saddle by her devoted cavalier, old Ludwig. Her heart had been swelling with emotion ever since the weather-beaten towers of Vaudemont had appeared in sight—less with a thought of herself, than with the tender associations connected with the loved and lost one whose childhood had been passed within their ancient walls; and as they approached, and she recognized scene after scene, from word-pictures drawn by those dear, silenced lips, they almost overpowered her.

At the arched doorway leading into the great hall stood the lady Muriel, her shining hair still unbound, and falling in bright waves of gold over her rich blue robe. Releasing herself from her father's embrace, she came forward with outstretched hands to bid her welcome. The warning words of Agnes were still ringing in her ears; but as she met Madeline's soft, dove-like eyes, raised through starting tears to her own, their timid, appealing trustfulness overcame her, and she drew her into a close embrace, saying, "Welcome, thrice welcome, sweet Madeline, my sister that is to be! We shall love each other well, I

know." And as Madeline looked up into that wondrously lovely face, and heard the silvery tones of that gentle voice speak words of such loving greeting, it is little wonder that a new love was born in her heart, destined to grow into that fervid, devoted friendship which stops at no sacrifice, counts no cost. And Muriel, as she led her up the great stone staircase into the tapestried apartment in which her mother sat, felt that, whatever Agnes might say, it could be no sin to love one whose guileless purity of heart was stamped so legibly upon her young, fair face.

The Lady Ermengarde received Madeline with motherly kindness, and tears filled her kind blue eyes, as she said, "Thou art very like thy mother, dear child. Thou must feel no stranger here, Madeline. Her child, and one so like herself, could not be such to me. I would thou mightst be to Muriel the half of what *she* was to me. And while thou art here, I will do my poor best to fill her place to thee."

Before night came, Madeline's feeling of timidity and strangeness was gone, and with a heart full of love and trust she sank to sleep, lulled by the distant roar of the sounding torrent in the gorge, as her mother had so often been in years long gone by. Since she had learned that God was her Father, and Christ a real, living, loving, all-sufficient, and ever-present Saviour, the bitterness of her grief for her mother had passed. She had no more doubt that her happy, ransomed spirit was at rest in the actual presence of Him who had filled her last hours with such a sweet sense of pardon and peace, than she had of the existence of the sun in the sky. Simply, undoubtingly she had received the gospel message for herself; fully, confidently she trusted her own soul to his grace and keeping; and could she question them for her mother? She did not. Of the existence of purgatory no question had ever arisen in her mind; she at once believed in its purging fires, and in the full, free forgiveness of all sin through the atoning blood of Christ.

Nor was this strange; at that time Luther himself did like-

wise. Illogical, contradictory, well-nigh impossible as this may seem to us, it was so. Not only with the doctrine of purgatory, but with the mass, the confession, and all the rites and customs of the Church of Rome. Men who from the pulpit preached the free pardon of sin through the blood of Christ, the perfect sufficiency of the *one* sacrifice *once* offered, who proclaimed Christ as sole Absolver and one Mediator, and declared boldly that salvation was not of works, but of faith, as yet conformed in all things to the old idolatrous ritual.

We must not charge them with duplicity. Slowly, gradually day dawned. It is not by overthrowing error God works, but by revealing truth. Truth subdues error as surely as light conquers darkness. In his good time, and for those individuals and nations whom he made "willing in the day of his power," it did so. But that time had not arrived at the date of which we write. A month before, Luther had addressed the Pope as "Blessed Father ;" and besought his "Blessedness" to "turn his paternal ears, which were like those of Christ himself, towards his poor sheep ;" and declared "before God and all his creatures that he had never wished, and did not then wish, either by force or guile, to attack the authority of the Roman Church, or of his Holiness ;" and he acknowledged that "there was nothing in heaven or on the earth which ought to be put above this Church, *unless it be* Jesus Christ, the Lord of all."

"Unless it be." Little did Luther then think whereto that "unless" would carry him.

It was some time before Madeline could summon courage to fulfil the purpose that had lain very near her heart since her visit to Vaudemont had been decided upon—to ask from the Lady Ermengarde the story of her mother's life. But one evening, as she sat on a low cushion at the lady's feet, sorting out her broidery silks, and listening to one of the stories of Provençal chivalry, upon which she so loved to dwell, the opportunity she sought for came.

The lady's story * had been of a youthful knight, of her own race and blood, who had fallen, in the first flower of his beautiful youth and early-gathered fame, on a field red with infidel blood, and strewed with trampled Crescent banners. The Saracen host fled from the fair Provençal shores, and the victor was laid to rest under the trophies of his victory, in the lonely burial-chapel of the De Coucis.

To rest and to sleep forgotten. His place knew him no more. No knightly foot trod the grassy path that led to the lonely chapel in the forest in which they had laid him; no kindred tears bathed the marble beneath which he lay. His place had been filled in the hearts of friend and comrade; kindred tears had all been shed; his destined bride bore another name than that by which he knew her; other deeds than his were heard in the minstrel's song. Forgotten, unhonoured, he lay in his early grave.

But there was one who forgot him not. Day by day, in summer and winter, in sunshine and storm, fresh garlands of fair flowers were hung upon Aymer's deserted tomb by the same loving hand through long years of faithful sorrow. And when at last a day came on which the withered wreaths hung unchanged upon marble helm and spear, the rich light which streamed in through the coloured windows upon Aymer's sculptured image, fell also upon the pale upturned face of one whose long heart-withering was over at last. In her cold hand she held a faded garland,—the last that would ever be twined for that forsaken tomb.

They bore her away from that lordly chapel, and laid her with her kindred dust in the lowly village burial-ground. In death, as in life, she was parted from him she had loved so well. But the faithful love of the humble peasant maid had won Aymer's fame from the oblivion into which it had fallen, and gained it a high place in minstrel lore by the lustre her patient devotedness had cast upon it.

* Taken from Mrs. Hemans's "*Peasant Girl of the Rhone.*"

Madeline wept at the touching story, and she asked the name of the faithful maiden.

"Name! ah! that was never told, my child; she was only a peasant girl. It is a mournful tale; yet Aymer was more hers in death than he could ever have been in life. For a nature so deep and noble as that could scarce have stooped to shame, and without it he could have been nothing to her."

"But did he not love her?"

"Yes. But he was a De Couci, she a low-born maid; the blood of his race had never been mingled with a stream less pure than its own. There is a dark tale told of one who fell by a brother's hand because he would have wedded a Moorish girl. The heir of the De Coucis could never have brought a peasant bride within his ancestral walls."

"But if he loved her, Lady Ermengarde, as she loved him! No high-born lady could have brought him a richer dower than that noble, faithful heart would have been," Madeline said with kindling eyes.

"That may be, child; but love is not free in the castle, if it be in the cottage. And yet it is hard to chain," she added in a low voice, stroking back the hair from Madeline's brow, and gazing into her glowing face with the sad, fond look, which made her feel she was thinking of her mother,—“hard, hard. I have seen that.”

"In my mother, Lady Ermengarde?"

"Ah, thou knowest it! Yet I thought she never spoke of the past to her children; not of that, at least."

"She told us much of her childhood and much of thee, dear lady. There is scarce a nook within or spot around this castle which does not recall to me things she told us when we were little. O Lady Ermengarde, tell me of her!"

"Dear girl, how shall I tell thee that which she sought to conceal?"

"She did not. O Lady Ermengarde! that night at Einsiedeln—the last before the one on which she died—she said

to me, 'I would that thou shouldst know the full story of my life, what I have hitherto kept folded back in my heart, thinking it best there. But thou art like me in temper and disposition, and I would save thee from the rocks on which I struck my bark.' But ere the second sun rose she was beyond it.

There was a pause, and then Madeline looked up in Lady Ermengarde's face and said: "Dear Lady Ermengarde, thou saidst, the first day I came, thou wouldst seek to fill the blank she has left; and in love and kindness shown to her orphan girl, thou hast done so. Wilt thou not in this? Thou only canst. Oh, sweet lady! didst thou only know how I have longed that thy lips might take the place of hers these weeks past! There can be nothing but what will make her memory dearer and more precious. And if there be sorrow, her rest is won now."

"The blessed saints grant it, Madeline! She was almost one of them below, I think. Thou art right, my child; thou wilt hear nothing but what will make thee love her more; and if her sorrow was a heavy one, we may hope it did its purifying work, and helped to purge her sweet soul from its sin. Knowest thou of her birth, Madeline?"

"Only that she was a low-born orphan, who never knew her parents, but was adopted by thy lady mother, and brought up as thy sister as far as might be."

"Then thou hast much to hear, Madeline. I was about three years her senior; and I think the first thing I distinctly remember was Theresa coming into this very chamber in which we are sitting with a bundle in her arms, in which was something that moved and uttered a plaintive cry. She went up to my mother, and throwing back the folds of a large cloak, revealed a lovely bright-eyed babe, of some eighteen or twenty months old. The little creature was wrapped in the coarse garments worn by peasant children, and even these were old and tattered. She looked about her with a half-frightened, half-bewildered expression, exciting my childish wonder and

interest ; then as my mother rose and bent over her, she suddenly raised herself in Theresa's arms, and, clasping my mother tightly round the neck, buried her little tear-stained face on her breast, and, after one long-drawn sob, ceased her piteous moaning.

“ ‘ Look, Theresa, look ! ’ my mother exclaimed, folding the little uncouth figure to her breast. ‘ She clings to me, the poor little helpless one. Is it not a token that the blessed saints have sent her to me ? Holy Mother, I accept the trust ! ’ I remember those words well, because it was very long before I could understand how it was, if the saints had sent her, they had not dressed her in better clothes, or how they had trusted her to an old man who was so stupid as to get half-buried in the snow !

“ But afterwards, when I was old enough to understand, I learned that one night there had been an unusually early snow-storm in the district, and that while a shepherd was seeking some sheep that had been left out on the mountain, he heard a low, wailing cry, like that of an infant, a few yards distant from him. At first he thought it was the spirit of a little child, that had died unbaptized through his getting drunk when he had been sent for the priest to administer the rite in haste, and would have hurried panic-stricken from the spot, but for the sagacity of his dog, which pertinaciously sought to lead him to it. At last he summoned courage to approach it, and discovered a man lying senseless and half-buried in the snow, with a little child wrapped in his cloak, and folded closely to his breast. It was fortunately not far to the hut of a goatherd, and with his assistance the poor man, who appeared to be a travelling pedlar who had missed his way in the storm, was conveyed thither. It was found that his leg had been broken by a fall on a projecting rock.

“ For two days the storm raged with such fury that the shepherds dared not venture to seek assistance, and ere the third the man was dead. When the tidings were brought to my

mother, she at once despatched Theresa to bring the poor little orphan to the castle, that it might be properly cared for till a nurse could be found in the village. But the child was older than was at first supposed, and from the moment she clung to my mother's neck, she decided to keep her at the castle and bring her up in place of the sister Heaven had denied me. And as she had been found in the snow on St. Margaret's Day, the name of Marguerite de la Neige was given to her. And well that name suited her—my sweet Marguerite, meek and fair, and enduring as the lowly flower that bears it, pure and spotless as the mountain snow."

"And the old man that died, was it never known who he was or whence he came?"

"Never. That he was the child's father, was certain by the way in which she clung to him, and by her constant repetition of the term of baby endearment by which she called him for days after her removal to the castle. He was not an old man, Madeline. Theresa, who saw him as he lay dead, said his face was quite young, though worn, as with grief or suffering, and his abundant hair was gray; and she has ever clung to the fancy that he was other than he seemed. His features were so noble, she said, his form so stately, even in its last sleep on the goat-herd's wretched bed. But death often gives strange majesty, and we had never cause to think she was right."

"And did he give no clew to the peasants who tended him? He lived two days, thou saidst."

"None,—at least none that we could gather. He had lain mostly in a stupor, they said. A few days after his death, Fulk, the shepherd, brought his pack up to the castle. It contained only laces and ribbons and such things as pedlars usually carry, and was given by my mother to Fulk as his reward. The body was laid in the burial-ground of the village church. My mother had masses said for the poor unshriven soul for years, and raised a stone over the grave. Thou wilt see it there, Madeline.

"Thy mother grew up with me, sharing my childish sports, and griefs, and tasks, beloved by all. Thou, who only rememberest the patient sweetness of her womanhood, canst not imagine how fair and joyous a being she was. And yet, ever through her innocent gaiety ran an under-current of pensive seriousness, of deep and fervid piety. Well I remember how earnestly she pleaded with my mother to permit her to enter a convent, so soon as the betrothal which had taken place in my childhood should have been fulfilled by my marriage with the Baron von Ohrendorf. She was alone, she said, without name or standing; the tenderness and generous love which had shielded her childhood could scarce extend to her mature years, and in the bosom of our Holy Mother Church she could not fail to find the protection and home she needed, the spiritual rest and peace she craved even then. Had my mother consented then, how much sorrow might have been spared her!

"But she would not. She foresaw for the fair girl, who was almost as dear to her as I, her only child, a bright destiny in this world. If her lowly and doubtful birth shut her out from alliance with the noble families she was so well fitted to grace, some gallant young soldier of merit or fortune might be found to whom a large dower, given with her, should prove a stepping-stone to advancement, perhaps even to nobility itself. Such was my mother's dream;—a dream, alas!

"At eighteen I was married. A few months afterwards, my mother died. Thy mother was scarce sixteen, when Bertrand de Chatillon, a distant kinsman of my mother, came to Vaudemont. He was young, and beautiful, and brave, full of Provençal fire and spirit. When thou seest my Raymond, Madeline, thou mayest picture him. He saw Marguerite, and loved her with all the passion of a fiery southern nature, all the depth and tenderness of a true and noble heart." The lady paused, overcome with emotion.

"And she?" Madeline murmured. "And she?"

"She loved him, Madeline, with all the pure devotedness of

fervid, clinging affection of which such a nature as hers was capable. But a dark cloud lowered over their heads, even in the first sunshine of acknowledged and requited love. Bertrand was of blood and race as pure and proud as that of De Couci, and to his haughty kindred the story of Marguerite's origin was well known. That they would consent to such a union was, they both knew well, improbable—almost impossible. But in vain did Bertrand urge Marguerite to link her fate with his without it; in vain did he plead that all earth could offer was but as small dust in the balance, compared with the priceless treasure of her love. Her nature was too noble, her love too unselfish, to stoop to concealment, to blight the fair promise of his opening life. Therefore they parted—alas, alas! to meet no more on earth.

“Bertrand's young, impetuous spirit could brook no delay. He went at once to the haughty Duke de Chatillon, his father, declared his love, and pleaded for his consent to their union. In vain, oh! utterly in vain! The anger and opposition of his family were even greater than we had feared. O Madeline! how shall I tell thee what remains to be told?” Lady Ermen-garde hid her face and wept, but Madeline sat pale and still, with clasped hands and parted lips, gazing with dilated, tearless eyes, up into the lady's face.

With an effort the latter continued: “But knowing thus much, thou must know all. Bertrand's grief and passion knew no bounds. He wrote to Marguerite a letter, breathing passionate, tender love in every line, and assuring her no human power should ever part them. Ere that letter reached her, the hand of Death had laid the writer low. A kinsman had spoken to him of Marguerite, first tauntingly, then insolently, then slanderously. High, bitter words ensued; then swords were drawn, and Bertrand fell—dead!”

There was a long, long silence. Then Madeline said, in a low, hoarse whisper, “He died—and *thus*—and yet she lived!”

“She lived, Madeline, indeed; hearts break, but not life-

strings. But from the bed on which she had lain unconscious for many weeks after the fatal news reached her, she rose but the shadow of her former self,—another, and yet the same. Fain would she have taken refuge in the holy calm of the cloister ; but in her grief, as in her happiness, she was unselfish. She would not leave me till after the birth of my first child. It was born at Basle, whither I had gone, in my fearfulness, to be under the care of a famous physician. I was never strong, and my health had been sorely shaken by Marguerite's grief and danger. There thy father saw her ; saw her, and loved her. How well thou knowest, Madeline ; strange as it may seem that a grave, plain burgher, so many years her senior, should choose a frail, sorrow-stricken, high-bred maiden like thy mother. Doubtless thou knowest the bond which unites thy father and the Baron : the latter was touched by the strong deep love that asked no more but the privilege of sheltering and binding up the poor bruised flower, and he was always strongly opposed to young, fair maidens burying themselves in convents. And I,—it was weakly selfish, perhaps,—but I was glad to retain my sister in the world anyhow. Poor Marguerite was too utterly crushed and broken to resist ; indeed, it needs great spirit to withstand the Baron's will when he is once roused, and my pleadings had at least as much weight as his commands.

“ But most of all, I think thy father's deep love touched her. ‘ I have no right to wreck the happiness of another life, and I can scarce hope God will accept the poor blighted one for which earth has no more attraction,’ she said. So they were married. Thy father bore her to his city-home, and I returned to Vaudemont. The rest thou knowest better than I. New ties and new duties grew around us both, and separated us almost as much as convent walls could have done. That we met so seldom was, Heaven knows, from no want of love, no forgetfulness. Currents in the tide of life oft drift two barks that set out together widely apart. But, Madeline,” she con-

tinued, as the girl sat as if spell-bound, "let not this press upon thy spirit. But oh, beware! beware! Give not *thy* young heart's love where it can yield no fruit but disappointment and anguish."

Still Madeline stirred not. "My child," said Lady Ermengarde, bending tenderly over her, while her tears fell fast on the bowed head, "I had scarce told thee this, did I not know well it would reach thee from other lips here, where all was known. And listen, Madeline: had thy dear mother told thee this, she would have told thee too, better than I can, how baby-lips drew out the bitterness from her grief, how clinging arms, and pattering footsteps, and young sweet voices, were balm to her wound; how her husband's tenderness and her children's love made her life-cup only too sweet. Often has she told me this. And perhaps her faith and prayers have been accepted, and poor Bertrand's unshriven soul released from purgatory ere this. Perhaps she too has now entered into the eternal rest."

"Rest," Madeline murmured; "rest, rest. She was weary and heavy-laden, and Thou didst give her rest. Oh, my Saviour! I thank thee! I thank thee! never so much as now!"

Then the tears came with a full-rushing flow that distressed Lady Ermengarde. She little knew with what fair rainbow-hues of love, and trust, and peace, they were lusted for Madeline; how real, and near, and dear to her was the hand that had healed that poor, bruised heart. At last; at last! Not only of its sorrow, but of its sin.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

" My door has opened—Death appears.
My God, my strength! dispel all fears
O Jesus, raise thy pierc'd arm,
And break the sword that caused alarm....
Death is at hand, my senses fail;
My voice is choked; now, Christ, prevail!....
My God, my Father, healed by thee,
On earth again I bend my knee.
Now sin no more shall mark my days;
My mouth, henceforth, shall sing thy praise."

ULRIC ZWINGLE.

(Written on recovering from the plague.)



HERE was a strange stillness in the usually busy streets of Zurich; no portly burghers and laden porters hurried to and from the almost deserted quays; few peasants passed in and out of the gates laden with fresh fruit and vegetables, and the produce of their little farms and poultry-yards; the market-place was almost empty, the shops partly closed; no housewives stood knitting at their doors; and many of the houses had the desolate, forsaken look of unoccupied dwellings. The few people who were abroad hurried along with strangely haggard faces and anxious eyes, shrinking, it seemed, from contact with one another. And ever and anon, as the heavy rumbling of wheels was heard, they fled, as if panic-stricken, in an opposite direction. At the corners of the streets and in the squares large fires of strong-smelling wood were burning, filling the air with their suffocating fumes, and adding to the oppression of the

close, heavy atmosphere, that pervaded the city. The plague, the terrible "black death," was raging!

It had made its first appearance in August; hundreds of the citizens had been already carried off, and scores of victims were daily being added to the number. A judgment, the monks said, on the pestilent heresies which had poisoned the air, and brought down Heaven's vengeance upon a presumptuous people.

At the time that the first strokes of the dreadful scourge fell, Zwingle was absent. His unwearied labours as a preacher, as a pastor, and as a student, had told upon his vigorous frame, and he had gone to seek repose and restoration at the famous Baths of Pfeffers. But no sooner did the tidings reach him of the awful ravages death was making in his flock, than he at once returned to his post, accompanied by his young brother Andrew, whose fraternal devotion cost him his life a few months later. Taking his life in his hand, the devoted pastor entered upon new work. The truths that he had hitherto proclaimed from the pulpit were gently breathed by the beds of the suffering and the dying.

Doubtless, even there the teacher was taught new lessons. Never are the solemn realities of eternity more real than in the awful presence of Death; never are the precious doctrines of the Word of God more precious than in the house of bereavement and anguish. The terrible visitation of that year was to be the turning-point in many a life—in none more remarkably than in that of Ulric Zwingle. But God's lessons are not learned by proxy. It was not enough for him to stand by the bed of the dying; he must himself taste the bitterness of the dust of death, and be brought to the gates of the grave. He was already mighty in the Scriptures, strong in knowledge and in faith, and zealous for the doctrine of Christ; but he had yet to learn that he himself was nothing—that Christ, not Christ's doctrine, was all.

At the end of October a thrill of dismay ran through the



They fled as if panic-stricken.

city of Zurich. Zwingle was smitten with the plague! From mouth to mouth the fatal tidings passed—from city to city. The torch which was to have given light to all Switzerland was about to be quenched, the faithful voice that had roused so many sleepers to be silenced! A cry of despair, of anguish, rose to Heaven.

Steadily, remorselessly, the fatal disease advanced. For days he hovered on the very brink of the grave. But that bed was not one of death; only a form in God's school, in which Zwingle was to learn that weakness is strength, man nothing, God everything. Hitherto he had been perhaps occupied rather with doctrine than with Christ himself; but from that bed of suffering and weakness he rose with a broken will and humbled heart, strong in the strength that is "perfected in weakness." He had learned to say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Henceforth he grew in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not of his doctrine only, but of him himself.

Zwingle resumed his labours before his enfeebled powers returned. With languid limbs and tottering steps he dragged himself to the bedsides of fellow-sufferers; with enfeebled memory and weakened mind he again preached Christ. But it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;" and who can doubt that more glory was brought to God, more brands were plucked from the burning, more jewels won for the Saviour's diadem, by one who had just learned in the furnace of affliction the two great principles from which all true and acceptable Christian service springs—the impotency and nothingness of the arm of flesh, the all-sufficiency and inexhaustibility of God's strength—than from one whose words, however wisely chosen from the armoury of truth, however burning and glowing with fervour and eloquence, came rather from the head than the heart?

Meanwhile the violence of the pestilence rather increased than diminished. Most of the stranger students had left the

city at the first alarm, many to perish in other towns ; for the plague ravaged the whole of the north of Switzerland, and even extended to Germany. Great numbers of the citizens, too, had fled ; but there were houses empty and deserted now from another cause—all those who once called them homes no longer needed one on earth. It was almost literally in Zurich as in Egypt of old : “there was not a house in which there was not one dead.”

November had come. The thick gray mists rising from the lake, borne across it by the cold biting winds that swept down from the mountains, mingled with the dark smoke of the fires of pine and juniper, and rested like a pall over the doomed city. The white walls of the old house in the High Street were blackened by the large fires kept constantly burning before it, and the closely-shut doors and windows gave it a cheerless, deserted look, on the gloomy November afternoon on which we return to it. The large house-room was silent and empty ; the dust lay thick upon the polished chairs and tables ; no fire was burning in the great stove, and a strange hush of stillness reigned throughout the house, broken from time to time by a low, faint, monotonous moan.

At length the heavy outer door was pushed slowly open by a tall, pale man, whose feeble strength seemed scarcely fitted for the task. His bowed frame and sunken cheek told of the ravages of disease ; but his dark, brilliant eyes, were full of fire, and an expression of holy serenity rested upon his fine but strongly-marked features. He was dressed in the garb of a secular priest ; and the wide garments hung loosely upon his attenuated figure. He advanced with some hesitation, as though a stranger to the house. No one appeared, and after waiting a few minutes, he crossed the room, and opening the outer door of Paul's chamber, rapped with his staff upon the inner one. A sweet, childish voice, bade him enter, and he did so.

Paul lay upon his couch as usual, and beside him, with pale,

tear-stained cheeks and swollen eyes, sat little Clare. Both gazed in surprise at the stranger priest, who came forward with a frank smile and kindly greeting. Then Clare started up, exclaiming, "Paul, it is Master Zwingle!" And, anxiety and grief overcoming her timidity, she said at once, "O sir, will you not go and tell Hanschen about the Lord Jesus Christ? He is dying; and they will not let me see him, lest I should catch the plague. Oh, do go! Hanschen was so afraid to die."

"Surely I will, my child," was the ready reply. "Where may I find the sick boy?"

"I know not if it be not already too late," said Paul. "He and my father lie in one room. And my father is no friend to thy doctrine, Ulric Zwingle. He will scarce peril his soul by listening to it now."

"It is not with doctrine I would come to him, but with balm from the Good Physician, medicine for a sin-sick soul."

"He would never hear thee preach, nor suffer his household to do so. He calls thee deceiver and heretic," said Paul, whose dark, searching eyes, were fixed on the pastor's face, as though he would read his very soul.

"Men called the Master a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber," Zwingle answered, with a gentle smile; "and *he* murmured not. He loved and he sought to save. The servant may scarce hope for better treatment than the Master. Of this he himself testifies. The message I bear, the truth I proclaim, are his; and I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Oh, Paul Reinhardt, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to thee through my weak human voice, thou wouldst not spend thy life in fruitless repining over broken cisterns, but wouldst ask of him who would give thee to drink of living waters, that would quench thy soul's thirst for ever. The fountain is free and open now, and thou wilt not drink!" Then, without pausing for a reply, he left the room.

Meanwhile the last sands of Hanschen's young life were

sinking fast. He lay upon his pillow scarce recognizable as the rosy boy whose unsubdued mirth had provoked Bertha's grave reproof not one short week before. The filmy eye, and livid features, and dark spots on the breast, marked the footsteps of the Destroyer. He still moaned at intervals, and asked for Clare. "What was it she used to say? what was it she used to say?" he repeated again and again; and then he would recur to the fancy that had haunted him all day, that he was journeying down a long dreary road, ending in a dark, dark gulf. "Was it a grave, oh, was it a grave?" he asked incessantly.

Bertha sought to soothe him as best she could, but in vain; the wandering brain pursued its weary fancies, while the little spirit journeyed on down the dark path of the shadowy valley. His piteous moaning had so distressed her father, that she had carried him into another room. From time to time she rose and went to her other patient, returning ever with a deeper shade of gathering despair in her dark, frightened eyes. Twice before had she watched the fatal march of the deadly disease. Lisig was dead, Hans dying; and her spirit died within her, as step by step it developed itself in its worst form in her father's case.

She was returning from one of her brief visits to his room, with clasped hands, and rigid lips that refused to murmur the cold Latin words that so utterly failed to express her heart's sore need, when she was startled, yet infinitely relieved, to see a stranger in the garb of a priest bending over Hanschen's little bed. "That was it! that was it!" Hans was saying, in the shrill, hoarse voice, so unlike his own. "Oh, say it again!"

And the stranger repeated, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"That is it. Did the Lord Christ say it?"

"Yes; and he says it to thee now, my child."

The boy raised his dimmed eyes to the speaker's face for a

moment and smiled. But again the troubled look came into them. "But I cannot come to him. I am going down, down. Oh, this road, this dark, steep road. There is a heavy weight dragging me on, and at the bottom a deep, black gulf—a grave; oh, so deep, so cold, so dark! I am sinking into it, so fast now, so fast! Hold my hand; O Bertha, don't let me go!"

"Thou needst not fear, Hans; the Lord Jesus went before, that thou mightst travel safely along it. Trust him to save thee; he only can. Let him take thee in his arms as he did the children of old."

"Will he take me up? I am tired, tired, tired; the road is so long, so rough." And the heavy lids drooped wearily over the dimmed eyes.

"He will; he is the Good Shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his bosom. He says so. Believe him; lie still in his arms. Thou canst not feel his arms, but they are under thee for all that. Lie still, poor little tired lamb; leave all to him. He will save thee. He loves thee."

The languid eyes had opened once more and fixed themselves on the speaker's face. For a moment there was silence, then Hanschen's voice was heard for the last time. A bright smile passed over the little livid face as he said, "O Bertha, it rests me—it rests me so!"

The eyelids fell, the tired head sank wearily on the pillow, the small hands were folded peacefully on the scarce heaving breast: a few quiet breaths, a long deep-drawn sigh, and Hanschen's weary feet trod the dark road no longer.

When Bertha looked up from the dead child's peaceful face, it was to recognize, with a start of wonder and dismay, the well-known countenance of Ulric Zwingle. He saw the start, and answered it. "The hireling shepherds leave their flock when the wolf approaches," he said; "then is the time for the few faithful ones to tread in their Master's steps. Thy friend, young Gerold Meyer, wrote me ere my sickness came upon me, and besought me, in case the plague entered this dwelling, to

go and proclaim to the stricken ones that salvation which can alone avail—God's free gift of life in Christ. He is troubled for the safety of thine afflicted brother, of whose sad state he has often spoken to me."

"Paul is safe, as yet ; but the father is stricken. I am alone ; our faithful old nurse died last week ; our maidens fled long ago. My father will not suffer me to send our little Clare into the infected streets ; and if I leave him to seek the aid it may take hours to find, there is none to tend him. And oh ! I fear he may die ere help reaches him," said Bertha, helplessness and distress breaking through her natural reserve.

"A doctor's services are indeed hard to secure ; the few left are sore pressed. Herr Cotter died last night."

Bertha clasped her hands with a cry of dismay.

"It may be I can help thee," continued Zwingle. "In ministering to the needs of the soul, I have learned something of the requirements of the body, and am wont to carry with me such remedies as the doctors prescribe. And if they fail, there are those that cannot,—the grace of God, which healeth all spiritual diseases—the blood of Christ, that cleanseth from all sin."

A moment Bertha hesitated ; but her father's life hung in the balance, and Herr Cotter's death had struck away the last reed upon which she had leant. Only the morning before he had stood by her little brother's bed ; and through the long hours of that dreary day she had watched with eager longing for his step upon the stair. It was no time for deliberation. Silently she led the way into the chamber in which her father lay

One glance showed to the practised eye that the terrible hand of the pestilence had been laid upon him with fearful weight. He lay in a kind of stupor, with the dull eyes half closed, the purple lips gasping apart, the features swollen and livid. Whether he was conscious or not, it was at first difficult to say ; but when the requirements of the poor suffering body had been ministered to, as far as possible, and Zwingle, draw-

ing a small book from his wide sleeve, prepared to read from it, the eyes opened and fixed themselves upon him with a look of mingled intelligence and distrust. "Who art thou?" he asked.

"One moved by the dear love of God to go and tell of his salvation to poor perishing souls, trusting to vain delusions and refuges of lies."

"Ulric Zwingle," said the sick man sternly, "I know thee. I know, too, how thou dost set up thy headstrong will and wild notions against the teachings of the Holy Church. I have never countenanced thy new doctrines—nay, I have ever opposed them. Wherefore dost thou thus invade the privacy of my sick-chamber, and seek to peril my soul even as thou dost thine own body?"

"Hans Reinhardt," returned Zwingle, "I weighed not the peril of my body against that of perishing souls before the disease struck me. And now, newly risen from a bed whereon I looked face to face upon death, and tasted of the sweetness of Christ's pardoning grace amidst the bitterness of bodily anguish and Satan's temptations, shall I shrink from teaching others, at any cost, the precious truth God wrote upon my heart in the dark hours which I spent in the very presence of the King of Terrors? I beseech thee, listen to His voice, not mine. Those who tell thee Ulric Zwingle sets up *his* will and notions against the Holy Church, speak not truth; what he alone seeks to do, is to oppose God's living, divine, but long-hidden truth to the teachings of a *corrupted* Church, to replace the errors of men by the pure doctrines of God's unerring Word. Oh! I beseech thee, turn not from the outstretched arms of Christ. He is the ALONE Saviour. Hear God's own words: 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.' 'There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.' 'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that *believe* are justified from all things.' 'The righteousness of God

which is *by faith* of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that *believe*: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through *faith* in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that *believeth* in Jesus.' Hans Reinhardt, these are the pure, simple, unadulterated words of God. This is the foundation on which my soul rested when I lay, as thou dost now, at the gates of the grave. This is the truth I preach; the truth in which, by God's grace, I live; the truth for which, if he so wills it, I am ready to die. Is this the teaching of Rome? Thou knowest it is not."

The sick man clasped his hands feebly over his burning brow. "My brain reels," he said. "If this thou speakest be indeed God's truth, as *she* said it was, my soul's salvation rests on a false foundation."

"'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,'" broke in Zwingle. "Rest thy soul upon him. He will never fail thee. He is the Rock of Ages—the Eternal Refuge—Jesus the Saviour. I ask thee not to trust my word—God forbid!—but his."

The weary, perplexed look of the haggard eyes, spoke of the conflict within, as the merchant said, in a low, faint voice: "Would that I had sifted the matter earlier. Now I cannot. My senses are confused, my mind weakened by sore pains. And it is a fearful thing to die without knowing whether I am believing God's truth to be a lie, or a lie to be God's truth. But I deemed thee a restless, innovating heretic. Better that thou hadst never come. If thou art a heretic, it were but mockery to make my shrift to thee; if not— But it is too late. I cannot think—cannot judge."

"And thou needst not. Forget all but that thou art a dying

sinner, Christ a living Saviour. Art thou afraid and troubled with thy sin? Thou needst not be. Death is the punishment of sin. Christ had no sin, there was no guile in his mouth, and yet he died! Ah! wherefore? Because he died in our stead. He laid down his life—no man took it from him; no man could—he laid it down that we in place of death might have life. He was pleased, out of his great love, to die to restore us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, to life; and as he had no sins of his own, the Father, who is full of mercy, laid all our sins upon him. **ALL! ALL!** Not one was left behind; not one unatoned for. The Lord made all our iniquities to meet upon him. And thus Christ, very man and very God, has purchased for us a redemption that will never terminate. It was the eternal God that died, therefore his passion is of eternal value: it brings salvation for ever and ever; it appeases Divine justice for ever in favour of all those who lean upon this sacrifice with firm and immovable faith. Rest thy soul wholly upon him. Sheltered by his blood, thou needst not fear to die."

But Hans Reinhardt did not die. For days his life hung upon a thread; then slowly, slowly the grasp of the fell disease relaxed; and at last he lay upon his bed, weak indeed as an infant, and the shadow of his former portly self, but out of danger. Many times the faithful servant of Christ snatched a few short moments from his various labours to spend at his bedside. A few verses of Holy Scripture read, a few pointed words about Christ spoken, a short prayer uttered, constituted the sum of these interviews. Herr Reinhardt rarely spoke; and when he did, it was usually to take exception to some bold assertion of unmasked truth. But for all that the foundations of error were being silently, surely undermined, by the calm, steady force of truth's mighty tide. In grace, as in nature, God's work proceeds in secrecy and silence. We know not how the leaf expands, the flower unfolds, the fruit ripens. Gradually, imperceptibly, line by line, tint by tint, we see the effect produced. That is all.

CHAPTER XX.

GLAD TIDINGS.

" Hallelujah ! I believe !
Sorrow's bitterness is o'er,
And affliction's heavy burden
Weighs my spirit down no more.
On the cross the mystic writing
Now revealed before me lies,
And I read the words of comfort,—
' As a father I chastise.' "

From " Hymns from the Land of Luther."



T was early one afternoon, in the end of January 1520, when a single horseman might have been seen urging his jaded steed up the snow-clad slopes leading to the Castle of Vaudemont ; that is, had the swift, steady whirl of small, close snow-flakes, which had shut the castle in from sight or sound of the world beneath it for three days past, permitted any object to be seen at a few yards' distance. Wearily the poor beast toiled on, sometimes sinking up to the girth in a drift, urged on partly by his rider's impatient hand and spur, partly by the instinct of stable and food at hand. Right glad were both when the portcullis loomed dimly through the gloom, and the heavy, muffled sound, of the animal's hoofs on the wooden drawbridge woke the old warder from his nap by the great fire in the basement room of his turret.

The sudden blast of his horn roused the Baron, who sat dozing away the dreary afternoon by the blazing logs on the

wide hearth-stone of the great hall, with three or four huge dogs at his feet, and Ludwig Schutz on the oaken settle opposite. The old trooper was the Baron's foster-brother, and had followed his master faithfully since before the latter's spurs were won on the glorious field of Granson. Many a tough fight and wild foray and desperate chase had they shared together, and well both loved to recall the glories of past days, and awake, each in the other, memories of which too often they and the grave were the sole guardians. They had talked long that afternoon, until, under the united influences of the fire and of the liberal potations from the huge silver tankard that stood at his elbow, the Baron dropped into a doze, which was broken by the unlooked-for sound of the warder's horn, and the furious barking of dogs in the castle-yard, in which the Baron's favourites joined in chorus.

"Now, by the Mass," he said, stretching himself with a prodigious yawn, "whoever comes through this storm deserves the best cheer the castle holds, be his errand what it may. And he shall have it, too, be he saint or sinner, churchman or heretic. Hey, Ludwig! See who it may be, wilt thou? and bring him hither. Ill luck to him if he bring no news."

The stranger proved to be a courier from Basle, and produced a packet of letters from the inner lining of his doublet. "Brought by the hand of the Count Rupert von Berlach to Basle, from thy son, the Count Raymond de Vaudemont von Ohrendorf, at Leipzig," he said, as he delivered the packet into the Baron's hand.

"Ha! thou hast thy lesson well by heart. Rupert von Berlach, saidst thou? How came Raymond to be favoured in aught by that villain?" said the Baron angrily.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "I know not," he said, "unless thy son be bewitched like him by the Lutherans. It is said in Basle that from a graceless young profligate the Count Rupert has become a heretic-saint. A Lutheran saint! Ha. ha! Well, Lutheran money is as good as a churchman's, and

a Lutheran's honour somewhat better. He lined my pockets well with the former, and bade me trust to the latter for further pay if I am back in Basle with thine answer before daybreak on the 29th, when he leaves for Leipzig. He had been delayed by sickness on the road."

"Well, hie thee to the kitchen and get warmed and dried. Ludwig, see thou to his cheer. A letter from thy young lord is welcome, brought by any hand."

Ludwig led the way through the vaulted passage into the kitchen; and the Baron, going to the foot of the great stone staircase, called, "Muriel! Muriel!" Even his stentorian tones would have probably failed to reach her ear through the thick walls, had not the noise of the dogs and the sound of the horn necessarily attracted attention, and one of Lady Ermen-garde's maids been on her way to ascertain the cause of it.

In a few minutes Muriel's light step tripped down the stairs. "Come hither, Muriel," said her father, holding up the packet. "Ah! hadst thou known what awaited thee, thou hadst flown rather than stepped so demurely. Letters from Raymond! For thee and thy mother, doubtless; but first—my old eyes can scarce see in this dim light—read what he has to say to me." It was strange how defective the Baron Wolfgang's sight was for literary purposes, considering how notoriously keen it was on the hunting-field.

Just at that moment Ludwig returned. "The knave forgot half his business," he said; "he has brought also a letter for Mistress Madeline, from her relatives in Basle."

"O father! let me take it to her at once!" Muriel exclaimed, eagerly. "I would see the glad light first spring up to her eyes, and her pale cheek kindle to its old soft rose again. It will doubtless contain the tidings of her home at Zurich, for which she has pined so sorely of late. I will not keep thee waiting a moment."

It would be hard to say in which rugged face most pride and affection gleamed, the father's or the old trooper's, as they

watched her run lightly up the rough stone stairs. "The saints grant it may bring the child good tidings," said the Baron; "but the plague is still raging. It irks me to see her sweet face so woebegone as it has been of late. Her presence has been such a boon to Muriel."

"Ay, and to others beside," said Ludwig. "Heaven's best blessings rest on her," he added, as he turned away.

"She has flown to her chamber, like a little fluttering bird, with her treasure," said Muriel, when she returned. "Now, father, for our own. Ah, Raymond, tell us thou art coming home," she said, as she unfolded the letter addressed to her father, and glanced longingly at the smaller packet bearing her own name.

The gray light that came through two deep-set, heavily-mullioned windows, was cold and dim in comparison with the ruddy blaze of the immense pine-logs that crackled on the hearth; and Muriel knelt on the bear-skin rug before it, mechanically caressing the head of the wolf-hound Leo, as she read her brother's letter. It was a picturesque scene. The great room, with its enormous oaken table and benches, the large carved chairs for distinguished guests, the strong chests of polished black oak, clamped with iron, that held the household treasures, the antique armour and long-disused weapons that hung amid trophies of the chase upon the walls, the faded banners that drooped from the rafters, dinted shield, and cloven helm, and broken sword, and tattered banner, alike full of memories of the past—lying cold and gray in the wintry daylight, save where, here and there, some piece of armour, or ancient weapon, less rusty than the rest, gleamed in the glancing firelight; and in the centre, round the glowing hearth, that fair picture of domestic life and love. The stalwart form of the old Baron, with his white head and ruddy face, bent forward with an air of eager interest, and his sinewy hands resting on the carved arms of his great chair, was vividly brought out by the red firelight, which played fitfully on the rich dress, and spark-

ling jewels, and shining hair of the fair figure that knelt at his feet, and illumined the beautiful, animated countenance, that was from time to time raised from the open letter to the father's ; while the three great hounds, in various positions, and with upturned heads, apparently listened with a comically grave air of interest and intelligence to what was going on.

It was soon broken up, however. The letter finished, Muriel sprang up, and, seizing her own and her mother's, hurried to the latter's apartment, whither the Baron presently followed her.

It was nearly an hour afterwards that Muriel lifted the tapestry hangings that alone separated Madeline's chamber from her own. The heavy folds moved noiselessly, without disturbing its occupant, who knelt by her bed, an open letter before her ; her hands clasped, and her face—down which tears were streaming fast—upraised as in prayer.

The colour faded from Muriel's cheek, and a look of terror came into her dark soft eyes.

"Madeline," she cried, her sweet voice trembling with emotion—"Madeline, what is it ? Oh, art *thou* again stricken for my sin ?"

Then Madeline looked up, rose from her knees, and said, with quivering lips,—

"O Muriel, Muriel ! the wonderful goodness of God !"

She could say no more, but, laying her head on Muriel's shoulder, wept unrestrainedly. But Muriel saw that her tears were caused by the melting of an icy grief by the sunbeams of a sudden, uncontrollable gladness, and sought not to check them.

"Dearest," she said at last, "I feared, when I saw thee weep, that another grief had befallen thee. It is not so ?"

"No, no ; not grief. Joy ! oh, such joy !—too much, too great ! But God gave it. Nothing is too good for him to give. Our Paul—our dear, stricken Paul ! Muriel, read this. *It* will tell thee ; I cannot." And she placed a letter in her hand.

Written at different times, as the various shades of ink evidenced, and by a feeble, unpractised hand, as the uneven, imperfect characters sadly testified, it was yet perfectly legible. It ran thus :—

“MY MADELINE, MINE OWN PRECIOUS SISTER,—It is thy poor Paul that writes to thee. Nay, thy *poor* Paul no longer ; but rich, rich in the love of God, in the grace and salvation of Christ. Yes, Madeline ! the precious light that is spreading so blessedly throughout our own and other lands, has reached even the darkened chamber of the helpless, guilty, presumptuous cripple—‘the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ And that light is love ; and that love is life ; and that life eternal. For Christ is the eternal God ; and Christ is ours—is mine ! *mine !*

“My feeble fingers can scarce perform their unwonted task ; but no other pen shall tell thee this—no other could. And it is meet that I, who have caused thee so much grief, should first make thee the sharer of my joy.

“My Madeline, I know there is no need ; yet let me say it. Forgive me, my sister ! oh, forgive me all the pain I have caused thee—all the bitter tears I have made thee shed. Thou wilt—thou dost ; for thou lovest me, and Christ has forgiven thee. Thou dost not know what thy presence was to me, even in those darkest days. I did not, till I had lost it. How little I thought then that I should one day praise God for the blank thine absence left !

“Of those dark, past days I will not speak ; my strength will fail ere I have told thee half of my present. And thou knowest what they were—what I was in them. No, thou dost not ; thou canst not. Thy gentle spirit could not conceive the depths of despair in which I lay, the height of guilt to which my rebellious spirit rose. God knew it ; and he pardons—he loves.

“When thou wert gone, I missed thee—oh, so sorely ! Then

I knew that my heart was not dead, that I loved still. The yearnings I felt for one tone of thy dear voice, one touch of thy gentle hand, awoke feelings that had long slumbered, that I thought dead ; unsealed the fount of tears—in secret. How it was, I know not ; God knows, for it was his work. But out of those yearnings grew others ; not for thy presence, and love, and forgiveness only, but for God's—the God of whom I heard from time to time such new, strange things. It may be that thy sweet letter from Basle—in which thou toldest me how thou hadst found in God a loving Father, in the Lord Christ a gracious, tender, all-sufficient Saviour—began them ; God knows.

“Some echoes of the world without reached me, and taught me how the new doctrines were spreading. To Gerold Meyer I owe most. From him I learned how Ulric Zwingle preached, and what. And sometimes he brought his Greek Testament, and proved that that was God's truth ; and by degrees I believed it to be such. Yet it shed no light on my heart ; for I looked upon myself as a reprobate, an outcast, shut out for ever from the favour of a God whom too late I had learned to be gracious and pitiful, loving and true, as well as just and holy.

“Then came the plague ; and with it I lost the hope of soon seeing thy dear face. Gerold left ; our servants fled ; Max and Friedel were away at Leipzig. I was left with our gentle darling, Clare. God has spared her, Madeline, through all the danger ; yet her place seems among the angels. Of our father's danger, and our poor Hanschen's death, they have told thee : and how Ulric Zwingle succoured us in our need ; how the voice with which the country rings spoke sweet words of heavenly love by our Hanschen's dying bed—by what, save for him, had been our father's. Clare will tell thee of Bertha's illness ; and of the Christian devotion of Sister Elizabeth, from whose lips I heard much of the love of Christ. Thou wilt remember her, Madeline—the sorrowful, exhausted nun, whom

thou didst succour on the way to Einsiedeln : the words that gave rest and joy to the dear mother's heart, brought life and peace to hers also.

“The father's first use of his restored strength was to go and hear Ulrich Zwingli expound the Holy Scriptures. He is a man of few words, as thou knowest, but no halter between two opinions ; and he says, the truth that robbed a death-bed of its terrors, and met a dying sinner's need, bears God's seal upon it.

“From that time Ulrich Zwingli has been as constant a visitor at our house as his heavy labours permit. I trust thou wilt one day know for thyself how sweet and winning are his manners ; how tender, and gentle, and gracious his dealings with poor, restive, sin-sick souls. Every word of his seemed to pour new light into mine ; and at last the fire within melted the icy barrier of reserve and pride, and I confessed its anguish to him. Rich and full and sweet were the consolations he showed me in Christ ; and at length I saw clear as day the whole plan of God's salvation. But, alas ! I read no hope in it for me. There was free, full salvation—free, full forgiveness—free, full, abounding grace and love, for the ungodly, for the sinner, for the lost, for those without strength, without hope, without God,—for all ; and all stored in Christ, and in Christ alone. And yet I thought they were not for me. I was all these ; but I had been something more : a rebel—a daring, wilful, presumptuous rebel, who had ventured to say unto God, ‘What doest thou?’

“Oh, I cannot tell thee the deep, deep sadness of those mournful weeks, when nothing had power to remove the conviction that when at last I met the Saviour's eyes, they would be averted from me with the dreadful ‘I would, but ye would not!’ I cannot tell thee the patience and tenderness with which Zwingli bore with me. He lent me some copies of various parts of the New Testament in Latin, made with his own hand at Einsiedeln ; and my heart was broken to contemplate the blessing from which my own wilful sin had shut me

out. All Zwingle's arguments were vain ; and at last he ceased them. 'God will himself show thee,' he said. And he was right.

"Father Gualtier had once quoted these words, which Zwingle owned to be God's, and which seemed to me to outweigh all others : 'Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker ! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ? or thy work, He hath no hands ?' Oh, the terrible meaning of that fearful 'Woe' to me, when it implied everlasting banishment from such a God, from such a Christ, from such a heaven ! A frown on an enemy's brow is terror ; on that of a loving and beloved but hopelessly alienated friend, anguish—anguish and despair.

"But the light came, straight from its Source. One sleepless night I was listlessly turning over some transcriptions, from the Vulgate, of the Psalms of David, that Zwingle had left with me. Words of grace met me everywhere ; but what had I, the outcast rebel, to do with hope and trust ? At last I saw a word with which I had to do—'the *rebellious*.' I read : 'God setteth the solitary in families : he bringeth out those which are bound with chains : but the *rebellious dwell in a dry land*.' Ah, I thought, there it is ! Showers of heavenly blessing, healing dews of pardoning love, living waters of free salvation, are indeed for the poor, the needy, the lonely, the captive—ay, for the defiled and the sinful—but not for the rebel : he shall dwell in a dry land. When I show Ulric Zwingle *this*, he will see that I am right.

"In the quiet night stillness I lay thus, sadly, hopelessly recalling all I had heard of the love and grace of Him 'who was dead, but is alive for evermore.' I could not weep ; I could not pray. My own thoughts grew intolerable ; and again I took up the psalm—it was the sixty-eighth—and read on till I came to a verse that ran thus : 'Thou hast ascended on high ; thou hast led captivity captive : thou hast received gifts

for men ; yea, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO, that the Lord God might dwell among them.'

"It was enough. The scroll dropped from my hands ; the tears sprang to my eyes ; the veil fell from my heart. On my Father's breast I sank ; no longer an outcast, no longer a rebel—a happy, pardoned child. Ah, Madeline ! since that hour my room has been a darkened one no longer, for it is the presence-chamber of a King.

"I need scarcely tell thee with how much toil and weariness I have written this. Now I must close ; yet my heart is so full that I know not how. Oh, for one hour of thy dear presence ! But thou must not come yet : the plague still lingers, though its violence has abated. And I shall meet thee yet ; that is certain. And *her* ! Ah, Madeline ! dost not thou, too, feel that she is not lost, not dead ?—ours still ; living, loving, with Him who is life and love.

"And now farewell ! O my sister ! thou knowest something of the love and grace of Christ ; but thou canst not know, as I do, to what depths his love stoops, to what height his grace rises. Oh, trust him ! Let nothing, NOTHING persuade thee to dishonour him by doubt, or fear, or slavish bondage. In doubt, in ignorance, in perplexity, in darkness, cling to him only. He will never let thee sink. Limit not his grace. He has saved *me* !—he loves *me* !—Thine ever,

PAUL."

CHAPTER XXI.

FAITH AND FEAR.

"I look to Jesus!—and the face
Of God is turned on me in love;
I feel a Father's fond embrace,
And all my doubts and fears remove."—C. T. ASTLEY.



FOR some minutes after Muriel had finished reading the letter, neither of the young girls spoke. It was a silence eloquent with deep feeling. At last Madeline said, looking up into the beautiful, thoughtful face beside her,—

"Muriel, thou canst not doubt that *this*, at least, is God's work."

Muriel turned her dark, serious eyes upon her, with a strangely troubled, wistful look.

"I would fain believe it such, Madeline; but can pure waters flow from a corrupt source?"

"Thou meanest the teachings of Ulric Zwingle. But if God owns them, Muriel, and if they, like Luther's, are drawn from the pure fountain-head of the Holy Scriptures, how can they fail to be in accordance with the mind of Him who wrote them for our learning?"

"Ah, Madeline, the stream that leaves its sources pure becomes coloured in its flow through an impure bed. And yet I cannot bear thus to cast a shadow over thy joy."

"O Muriel, if thou didst but share it! Not my joy only in

knowing my poor suffering brother safe folded in the arms of a loving, compassionate Saviour, but in feeling the same strong, tender arms around thee."

"When I am with thee, Madeline," Muriel said, after a long pause, "I can almost feel that. Thy bright trust raises my spirit too, and I forget the terrible majesty of God in his love; and I see not how, in grasping at a shadow, I may lose the substance—how, under the semblance of a purer truth, I may be folding around me the festering garment of heresy."

"The pierced hand of the Lord Christ is no shadow, Muriel; the spotless robe of his righteousness is a covering on which no stain can rest."

"That is true. But, Madeline, thou seest not, as I do, how opposed are these teachings, upon which so many are ready to stake their souls, to the doctrines of our Holy Church."

"No," said Madeline thoughtfully; "I only see Christ in what I only saw form before; a Father where I once saw only a Creator and a Judge. And oh, Muriel! I thought thou hadst learned to believe he loved thee, and willed thy happiness, thy salvation?"

"I do, Madeline; but *how*? I have been too happy, too thoughtless of late; too willing to believe what was so pleasing to my poor, weak heart."

"And when is a father best pleased, dear Muriel? When a child is at ease in his presence, happy in his protecting love and care; or when he is sad and fretful, and cowers from his eye?"

"But a wayward, disobedient, child, Madeline?"

"Is only such so long as he refuses to cast himself into his father's outstretched arms! O Muriel! it is that word 'Father' that fills me with confidence and peace. There is no sounding its depths of meaning. He has said, 'I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.' And he will not assume the name without being all to us that it implies."

"But is it right, Madeline, to measure spiritual relationships by earthly ones?"

"No," said Madeline, a soft light kindling on her face—"no, not to *measure* them. For the first are infinite ; the second imperfect and limited, and marred by sin. But they are God's illuminated alphabet, by which he teaches us, by pictures of such things as we can comprehend, to understand something of what would otherwise be beyond us. And when God calls himself our Father, he means us to look to him for all that a child might expect from the tenderest earthly parent, and much more."

"Thou dost find him such, Madeline," said Muriel, half sadly, half wistfully.

"Do I not? Does not *this* prove it? and all the love and goodness I have met here?"

"*That* is no marvel, sweet Madeline. Who could but love thee? And before thou camest, I thought earthly love sinful."

"But thou dost not now. O Muriel! God is love. When we love, we are most like him."

"Ah! but it is spiritual love alone that is pleasing to God."

Madeline looked puzzled. "I do not know," she said. "Where does the earthly end and the spiritual begin? Since I have known God loved me, it has seemed as if I loved every one—as if I must."

"Oh that I were like thee, Madeline!—simple, and pure, and true; picking the gold from the dust-heap without contracting any of its defilement. Heresy itself could scarce harm thee; thou wouldst choose the good and reject the evil."

"But it is no heresy to look up to God as a Father; to trust in the blessed cross of the Lord Christ; to believe in the Sacred Scriptures. And we have only to do that, Muriel, thou and I, and to obey the Holy Church; and it is easy to obey when one loves and is loved."

"Yes," said Muriel thoughtfully; "when one is loved with such love it *ought* to be easy.—I have given thee scant sympathy in thy joy for thy brother, Madeline," she continued, after a pause; "but my heart is heavy and troubled for my own."

“And why art thou troubled? Is the plague at Leipzig?”

“Not the plague thou fearest, Madeline; but perchance a deadlier one. Thou knowest how, in Raymond’s last letters, he spoke of the discussion between the monk Martin Luther and Dr. Eck, at which he was present, and how warmly he took the former’s part, as that of truth and justice. He does still. And, O Madeline! thou knowest what things we have heard of this Luther of late: how he declares the heresy of Huss to be the same doctrine as that taught by St. Paul and St. Augustine, and the earlier fathers of the Church; how he questions the merit of the blessed sacraments. And Raymond has again met that fiery, turbulent spirit, Ulrich von Hütten, at Ebernberg, the castle of the knight Franz von Sickingen. He had ever great influence over Raymond, and he makes common cause with Luther. So does Franz von Sickingen, and half the nobility of Germany, Raymond says. So thou seest, Madeline, I have need to fear for my Raymond; he is so ardent, so impatient of oppression and wrong, so full of generous trust and hope. Oh, I tremble lest he should be led into some deadly heresy!”

“Does he speak of returning?”

“No. And my father wishes him to represent him at the Assembly of Frankfort, where a new Emperor is about to be chosen. Frederic of Saxony has refused the imperial crown. It is a pity, Raymond says; so wise, and pious, and moderate a prince might have done much in composing the religious disturbances that are arising in every part. The choice lies now between the young King of Spain, Charles of Burgundy, Francis of France, and Henry of England. But thou lookest grave, Madeline; these things interest thee not.”

“Ah, pardon the burgher maiden!” said Madeline, with a start and smile.

“Thy thoughts are in thy home, Madeline, and I have not even asked thee how it fared with the dear ones there. Thy sister Bertha has been ill, Paul says.”

“Yes. Clare tells me that as my father recovered, Bertha grew pale and weak, but would acknowledge no illness, until one day Clare found her leaning faint and powerless against the table in the kitchen. She had just strength to drag herself up-stairs with the father’s help. She lay down, hoping to revive soon, but grew worse and worse. It was the plague, but in a different form. She had little pain, but was utterly prostrated, and no remedies appeared to have any effect. Dear little Clare! It must have been a sad time for her—my father still feeble, and Paul helpless and suffering. They knew not where to turn for help; and Bertha’s distress at this increased her illness. But, O Muriel, let me read thee Clare’s own words! Her simple faith will help thine. She says:—

“‘How I longed for thee, Madeline! I am so little, thou knowest, and I did not know how to do some things, and had not strength for others. The doctor said he would send help if he could; but people had grown so hard and cold, and some so fearful, he was afraid he should not be able. And the good, kind priest, Ulric Zwingle, did not come. The second night was coming. Bertha lay white and still; the father had come in faint with walking about the city seeking help, and poor Paul was all alone. I would not cry, because it troubled Bertha, and my heart felt as if it would break. But all at once I remembered that Gerold had told me that the Lord Christ had once said, “If ye shall ask *anything* in my name, I will do it.” O Madeline, was it not strange I did not think of it before! And even then I did not quite know if this was a thing he would care to do—just help a poor little girl and some sick people. But it said *anything*; and I remembered how good he was—how he loved us. So I knelt down and asked him to send some one to help us.

“‘I don’t know how it was, but I felt quite sure he would, and the load seemed lifted off my heart. Then I went down and unfastened the door. Thou wouldst not think it at this sad time, but there have been some wicked people about, who have

gone into the empty houses, sometimes into those where the last people lay dying, and made wild work in them. When I went up again to Bertha, she made me lie down, and told me to go to sleep. I was very, very tired, and I did so ; for I knew the Lord Jesus would send some one, and they would find the door open. When I awoke, it was just breaking day. I had slept all night. It was very selfish of me ; but, indeed, I was so weary. And then, seated by Bertha's bed, I saw a nun, old, and with a worn, thin face, but with such a sweet, kind look upon it. She told me she had come to nurse Bertha, and to do anything she could for us. And when I asked her who sent her, she said, "The Lord Jesus Christ, little one—the dear Saviour who loves thee." O Madeline, was it not good of him to hear the prayer of a poor, little, tired, sorrowful child ?

"Paul says he will tell thee himself how happy His love has made him. Couldst thou but see him, Madeline, as he lies with such a soft light in his eyes, such a sweet smile upon his pale, calm face !

"But I must tell thee about Sister Elizabeth. After she came, the worst trouble was over ; for though Bertha lay ill a long time, she was not likely to die, and the good nun did all I could not do. I cannot tell thee how kind and good she is. All through this dreadful plague-time, she has been away from the convent nursing the sick and comforting the dying. And, O Madeline, the beautiful stories from the Gospels she told us ! I will tell thee them all when thou comest home. I can never forget them. Ah, I never knew half what the Lord Jesus was, till I heard them ! I do not wonder now at anything he does. Nothing is too good, too kind. Is it not wonderful that Sister Elizabeth should be the very nun we saw on the road to Emsiedeln ? She bade me tell thee she had found what she had so long sought in vain. Thou wouldst rejoice, she said, to know the weary, wayworn nun, had come to the end of her long pilgrimage in search of forgiveness. I told her thou hadst not forgotten her ; and she sent thee her blessing.'

"O Muriel," said Madeline, as she finished reading, "is it not sweet to know the Lord Christ thus? We must not lightly judge those who have rent away the veil that has so long concealed Him from longing eyes and aching hearts, because in their zeal and haste they drag with it things that are holy and good indeed, but which should not come between our hearts and Him. And all they seek to do is to purify and cleanse, not to destroy."

"I would fain believe it so, Madeline. And, as thou sayest, to know Him to be thus gracious, and tender, and pitiful, is indeed sweet. But ought we not to be ready to give up *all* for Him who gave up all for us?"

"Ah, that is sweet, too; for what have we to give but our sins and our sorrows, our poor, blundering attempts at loving and pleasing him—ourselves just as we are? And we but give him his own—'Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.'"

The gray wintry evening had closed in as they talked, and Madeline could not see how agitated was Muriel's face as she said, "Suppose he came to thee, Madeline, and claimed thee for his service. Suppose he said to thee: 'I have loved thee, I have agonized and bled, I have fought and conquered, I have suffered shame and scorn for thee. I have given up all for thy sake. Follow me; tread in my steps; share with me the earthly loss and pain, so shalt thou share my heavenly bliss and glory.' What wouldst thou do, Madeline?"

Madeline paused before replying. "I think he has claimed me, Muriel," she said at last. "He died for me; I am his; and I have no dearer wish than to follow where he leads. He is the Good Shepherd, and will never lead his poor, silly lamb by a wrong road."

"Thou hast always such sweet thoughts, Madeline. But what if some foolish lamb persist in turning from the steep, narrow, lonely path to which he ever points, and goes on down a wrong road—a broad, green, flowery road?"

“He would go after it until he found it once more; then he would lay it on his shoulders, and bear it home rejoicing. His own words, Muriel, in the sweet parable of the Lost Sheep, which I heard Capito expound at Basle. And, O Muriel, it is true; he does it. I was lost, and he found me; and the dear mother, and Uncle Andrew, and Aunt Katterin: and now Paul, the poor wayward one; and Sister Elizabeth, the sad, despairing nun. Ah! I must tell thee of her, Muriel.”

“Thou hast told me, dearest.”

“Not what she said to me. I scarcely liked to repeat her words. They troubled me at first, but this precious light makes all plain; and it will show thee still more of God’s power to heal.”

Muriel sat still and silent while Madeline repeated the nun’s vividly-remembered words. When she had done so, Muriel was shivering from head to foot. “Thou art cold,” said Madeline. “I have kept thee talking too long.”

“No, I am not cold; but, O Madeline, these are solemn words, terrible words.”

“They are sweet to me,” Madeline answered softly. “God’s first call to me was, ‘Come unto me;’ and I came, and he gave me pardon and peace.”

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

"...We went slowly down
To the river side,
Till we stood in the heavy shadows
By the black wild tide."

B. M. (*From "Ezekiel, and other Poems."*)



GAIN the Lady Muriel von Ohrendorf stood alone on the castle battlements, watching a travelling party that wound slowly along the road at the foot of the slopes. It was a glorious summer morning ; the sun had not yet risen high in the blue June heavens ; the dew lay sparkling upon the grass ; and the sweet, balmy air floated gently round her, bearing with it the sweet scents and sounds of early day. There were tears in her large dark eyes, and her lips quivered as she watched the little party until they disappeared finally at a bend of the road that entered a thick overhanging wood. Then they fell thick and fast, and for a time her face was hidden.

But when she again raised it, a gentle smile struggled through her tears, as she murmured, still gazing on the path down which the travellers had disappeared, "Farewell, my sweet Madeline, my sister ! I shall miss thee sadly, oh, sadly ! But I must not grudge thee to thy poor suffering brother, and the home that for my sake has been robbed of thy sweet presence so long. And if thou art gone, thou hast left a blessing behind thee. I am not such as thou foundest me. How well I remember the

day thou camest, when I stood at this very turret with a heart torn with conflict and dread. How could I doubt whether I might love thee? Ah, well, thou hast taught me better; for thou hast taught me that God is love—a Father, caring even for the earthly needs of his children; that the Lord Christ is no stern, exacting taskmaster, but a pitiful, tender, all-sufficient Saviour. My Madeline, I must treasure well thy parting words: ‘Listen to no other voice than that of the Good Shepherd, Muriel; follow only where he leads.’ Mother of grace and mercy, teach me to do so!”

It was considerably more than a year since Madeline had arrived a stranger at the Castle of Vaudemont, and now there was not a heart in it that did not feel regret at parting with her; from the jovial Baron himself to the rudest stable-boy, not one that did not treasure the remembrance of some gentle word spoken or deed of kindness rendered.

Yes, there was one. Agnes had watched the growing affection between her and Muriel with strong displeasure, and marked the effect of her influence, in the latter’s restored cheerfulness and evident avoidance of herself, with jealous pain. Yet we must be just to her. It was no narrow, personal jealousy, that moved her. She had no selfish motive or end in view. She had concentrated every thought, every purpose, to the one great end—the salvation of the Lady Muriel’s soul. And this she truly believed could only be effected in one way—by her renouncing the world that wooed her with so many attractions, and obeying the deep, mysterious voice, that had so long called her to forsake it. It was a mission to which she believed Heaven had appointed her.

Personally, Agnes had avoided Madeline, whose sensitive spirit naturally shrank from the stern, austere woman, of whom Muriel stood so much in dread; and seeing her ever diligently observant of all the forms of the Church, and being, besides, engrossed in her own dreams and devotions, Agnes had had no suspicion of Madeline’s heretical views, until they had taken too

firm a hold on Muriel's mind to be lightly shaken ; at least, while Madeline was there to fan the feeble spark of faith her words and example had kindled. Therefore it may well be imagined that it was with no feelings of regret Agnes listened to Madeline's farewell.

The plague had prevailed in Zurich until February ; the spring had been unusually late and cold, and Madeline's departure had been delayed from time to time, until a special courier from Zurich had brought her a letter enjoining her to return with all possible speed, as Paul was again dangerously ill. The following day she was on her way to Basle, where she trusted to meet Max and Friedel.

The suddenness of the parting took away much of its pain, and what remained was partly absorbed by sympathy on Muriel's side and anxiety on Madeline's. Very deep and tender was the affection that had grown up between them. The proud, beautiful, high-born Muriel, leaned on the gentle, lowly Madeline, for she had a strength that was not her own. And by degrees Madeline had come to understand Muriel, and the source of the spiritual conflict that had undermined her health and spirits before she came. She could not and did not attempt to argue with her ; she had no thought of the convent life being other than the highest vocation a Christian could receive and follow ; but a deep, strong sense of God's fatherly tenderness and love had penetrated her inmost soul, and in simple, child-like faith, she had laid hold of the plain, broad principles of the gospel, and received Jesus into her heart. Yes ; that was the secret of her peace, her confidence, her joy. She had received *Jesus himself*, a living, loving, personal, present Saviour. She had not consciously let go one article of her old creed ; the Word of God was as yet a sealed book to the unlearned ; the conflicting opinions she heard from time to time expressed by various guests at the castle table bewildered and perplexed her. But a child may enjoy a father's fair inheritance even if he cannot explain its title-deeds, or comprehend the principles by which

that father will have it ruled. And Madeline, looking up and meeting the loving smile of a reconciled Father, and feeling the sure clasp of a crucified Saviour's pierced hand, was content to rest thus, leaving things beyond her comprehension to other and wiser heads, or till further teaching should make them clear to her.

But the instinct of the new life within her rose against the bondage in which Muriel's spirit lay, and taught her that it arose from utter misapprehension of the character of God and Christ; and she sought ever to lead her to dwell on the great, grand truths, which stood so clearly out from the confusion and perplexity which points of doctrine always occasioned in her own mind. The love of God in Christ was her answer to every perplexity.

And by degrees the cloud passed from Muriel's spirit, the light came back to her eye, and the colour to her cheek. At times the dread and depression would return, but they always were dispelled by a talk with Madeline, and had almost entirely disappeared since the receipt of Paul Reinhardt's letter. From that time she had seemed to accept unquestioningly the sweet consolations of the gospel, and to be happy in the sense of a Father's love. Still, she dreaded Madeline's departure unspeakably. The latter little knew how much or wherefore.

The year Madeline had spent at Vaudemont had been on the whole a happy one; her naturally gay spirits had fully recovered their tone, and in Muriel's congenial companionship, and in the motherly kindness of the gentle Lady Ermengarde, she had found a potent balm for the home-sickness which sometimes made her very sorrowful during the first months of her stay. The autumn and winter had been an anxious time, when the plague was busy at Zurich, and one familiar face was taken from the midst of the home band; and her longings to be amongst them were only kept in check by her deep love for Muriel. Lady Ermengarde had learned to love her for her own as well as for her mother's sake, and had found in her a more ready and

efficient helper, in her various monotonous occupations, than the dreamy, preoccupied Muriel. Madeline had a talent for designing and embroidery, and would patiently spend hours over some new device, while Muriel would be poring over a musty folio. Accustomed to be her mother's deputy in the poor homes of Zurich, she contrived to interest the Lady Ermengarde in the hopes and sorrows of the poor villagers whom she had hitherto only helped with alms ; and from many a wretched hut to which her presence had brought the sunshine of kind words and sympathy, blessings went up to Heaven—blessings such as the mere gift of gold never evoked. Wretched, ignorant, degraded, were the dwellers in these poor peasant homes ; but Madeline knew that Jesus loved them, and she went and told them so. Tears rolled down bronzed and rugged faces, and poor, empty, hungry hearts eagerly received the words of life. “He ~~that~~ watereth shall be watered also himself ;” and doubtless these ministrations of Madeline to those despised, neglected ones, gave her a clearer realization of the priceless value of the gospel, of the power and fitness of the salvation of Christ to meet every need, and tightened her grasp on what she knew of God's precious Word.

And Madeline rarely went to the village without visiting a grave that stood alone in one corner of the church-yard. There was a stone cross at its head, on which the words were carved—

*Ci-gît
Un Inconnu.
Priez pour son Âme.*

It was her grandfather's. Under her care the shrubs which had been planted by her mother's hand flourished once more, and the long deserted mound was often covered with wreaths and chaplets of flowers. Sadly, with tender, reverent wonder, she thought of him who had so long slept beneath it,—the unknown, humble wanderer, with the worn *young* face and the silvered hair, whose form was so stately even in death,—and longed to know of what sad life-mystery that nameless grave was the end.

She was never weary of hearing that story from old Theresa, whose memory, feeble and faithless for the events of the passing hour, freshly preserved the cherished pictures of bygone days.

Madeline reached Basle in safety, and found Max and Friedel awaiting her arrival, on their way home from Leipzig. Their anxiety for Paul admitted of no delay, and they left for Zurich the following day. Thus, under the heavy shadow of a terrible dread, the day came to which Madeline had looked forward with such eager longing.

The hours dragged tardily, wearily by that day, to the watching, waiting ones at Zurich. The courier had been delayed on his way to Vaudemont, and the travellers were consequently expected long before it was possible for them to arrive. It was hard to think that the sufferer's last earthly wish might not be gratified. The hopes that the remembrance of past dangers and deliverances had long kept alive had at last died out in their breasts. Upon a specially agonizing attack of Paul's ordinary malady had supervened a peculiar, low, prostrating fever, the last remnant of the plague, that had prevailed in the city for months past; and a frame enfeebled by disease, and exhausted by suffering, was little capable of supporting its ravages.

Marvellous had been the change in him since the memorable winter night of which he wrote to Madeline. At first it had seemed as if the healing that had come to his sin-sick soul was extending also to his frail, suffering body. No longer worn and exhausted by mental conflicts, his strength had increased, and he had applied himself with eager interest to the long-discontinued studies which now promised to open a way for him into an exhaustless mine of precious truth. With the delighted Gerold for his teacher, as he had once been his pupil, he again opened his Greek books, and bent every faculty of his naturally powerful but sickness-enfeebled intellect, to attain such a proficiency in that language as should enable him to read God's pure and unadulterated truth in the very words with which the pen of inspiration expressed it.

And richly was he repaid for his patient struggle with at times overpowering weakness and pain, by the daily increasing light that poured into his heart, by the constant discovery of fresh priceless gems of grace and truth in the exhaustless treasury of God's precious Word. Love, joy, peace filled his happy, rejoicing spirit, and beamed from his dark spiritual eyes. And though reluctantly and sadly he had been compelled to yield step by step to the encroachments of disease and pain as the summer approached, and at last to lie fevered and helpless, unable to read or even think connectedly, a sweet abiding peace filled his soul; his weary heart had found its true resting-place, and he lay calm and quiet and trustful in the safe embrace of the everlasting arms. No murmur passed his patient lips, and the grateful love with which he received every little service rendered, or attempt to relieve his sufferings, often moved even Bertha to tears.

Only one wish had he ever expressed,—that he might be spared to see Madeline once more, and to clasp his brothers' hands. And those who knew what his life had been, what it must ever be on earth, and were enabled in measure to realize by faith what it would be in heaven, were almost willing to let him go. Almost, not quite; for the heavy shadows that rested on the future state had been but imperfectly dispelled.

But Bertha was not of these. Pale, tearless, she sat that bright June day, with rigid face and mournful eyes, watching hour by hour by the sufferer's side, ministering to his wants, and listening to the low, faint, whispered words that came from time to time from the feeble lips on which the death-silence so soon might fall,—words of faith and hope and love generally, sometimes of wandering fancy. Poor Bertha! hers was the saddest heart there; for it was bound still by the gloomy bonds of the Prince of Darkness.

Clare was there, holding one of the sufferer's wasted hands, her soft eyes heavy with unshed tears, her sweet face pale with emotion, and her lips trembling with the grief which might find no utterance then. Yet from those pale, quivering lips came

the sweet words Paul loved so well, and sometimes a faint smile shone on them in answer to the one that lit his peaceful countenance. For Clare's child-heart was stayed upon God too

And Herr Reinhardt? He was not wont to display emotion; but since the plague his health had been feeble and broken, and there is no influence like that of the gospel of God's love for breaking down the barriers of pride and reserve; and his poor crippled boy, his lost Marguerite's darling, was very dear to him. Far down in that deep, silent heart, were depths of unsuspected and undeveloped tenderness; and as from time to time he met his boy's eyes, the tears rolled slowly down his cheeks.

Gerold von Knonau had watched with them through the morning hours, but when some one's entrance into the house-place had brought a sudden flash of life back to his friend's faded face, and he saw the glad light die out of those dark wistful eyes when they for whom he looked came not, he could bear it no longer, and had ridden out on the way to Basle, if perchance he might meet the travellers and urge them to greater speed.

At last they came. Gerold first stole in noiselessly, but Paul was not deceived. "They are come," he whispered. "My God, I thank thee." Another moment, and Madeline's kisses were on his brow, her warm tears on his face. "Oh! Paul, Paul!" she sobbed, "thou must not leave us thus. Oh! why did I ever leave thee?"

"Our Father willed it so, my Madeline. Our Father. Thine and mine. He knows best. Doubt it not. Oh! his love, his wondrous, wondrous love!"

The feeble strength failed, and Madeline gently laid his head on its old familiar place in her bosom. "And thou hast no fear, no trouble now, Paul?" she asked, as the dark languid eyes met hers with a wonderful expression of love and peace in their liquid depths.

"None. O Madeline, how can I fear *Him*? He loved me, and gave himself for me. I was lost, and he found me. I was a rebel, and he saved me. I am his child, and he loves me, even *me*. Thou canst spare me to him, Madeline—and *her*?" Madeline could only answer with her tears.

Then Paul lay still, till, with a sudden thought, he asked for Max and Friedel, and they came forward from the screen behind which they had hitherto stood. He held out his feeble hands to each in turn, and said, "You will forgive me for all my petulance and jealousy. It was born of such bitter, bitter pain. When I saw your lives so full of the brightness I might never share, I almost hated you. But since I knew *He* loved me, all has been changed. Thou understandest me, Friedel. Max, dost thou?"

But Max, impetuous, passionate Max, was too much agitated to reply, and Paul added faintly, "But now the brightness is mine rather than yours. I am going into the light above, you will be left among the shadows below. And yet I could almost have wished to stay a little longer, if I might but share with you the glorious privilege of making known his love and spreading abroad his light. But He knows best."

"Thy wish may be granted thee even yet, Paul," said Friedel. "He who raised the four-days' dead has surely power to bring back from the gates of the grave."

A strange, swift light flashed over Paul's face, and though he sank back exhausted on Madeline's breast, an expression of questioning wonder, of wistful, troubled thought, rested upon it for a few moments. Then he said, "I know not, Friedel. And it would be hard to turn back now, when I have looked hour by hour to see him face to face. But I am his; and he doeth all things well. I can but lie passive in his arms, and I think they are bearing me safely, gently—*home*."

And so they all thought, as the weary head rested heavily on Madeline's breast, and the tired eyelids drooped over the dark languid eyes. For long they watched in silence, broken only

by low, stifled sobs, for the first shadows of the last awful change to steal over the beloved face, stamped with a deep restful serenity and peace, that gave it a strange beauty even among the mournful traces of suffering and exhaustion. But hour after hour passed on, and it came not. Still Paul slept, quietly, peacefully as an infant. Sometimes the soft, beautiful eyes opened, and a sweet look of recognizing love lit the pale countenance as he took the offered medicine or food. And by degrees, with a thrill of awe and wonder, each heart became conscious of the presence of a new-born hope. Gerold had joined them, and had induced Clare to quit her place by Madeline's side, and to let him place her among the cushions of Paul's long unused couch. And there, with her hand fast clasped in his, and the tears still wet upon her cheek, she slept soundly, worn out, poor child, with anxiety and grief. Of the others Max only had been prevailed upon to leave the room; his uncontrolled agitation had appeared to disturb the sleeper, and he had consented, under a promise of a quick summons, should the dreaded change come.

But it came not. The night had passed, and the gray dawn was breaking in the eastern sky, when Paul suddenly opened his eyes, and gazed round with a wondering, thoughtful glance. There was quiet comprehension in it, too, as it passed from one pale watching face to another. "Watching still," he said at last. "Is that the day breaking?" Friedel had drawn back the curtain, and the first dim light was contending with the feeble rays of the expiring night-lamp.

Being answered in the affirmative, he continued in a low, calm, steady voice, that carried conviction with it, "It is the dawn of a new day, an *earthly* day for me. You may go to rest now. I am not going to leave you. The Lord has need of me here!" And there was so much life in eye and voice that the trembling hope just struggling into existence in each heart sprang up at once into sudden, rejoicing confidence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN SIGHT OF THE GOLDEN SHORE.

" Oh, then upon his raptured gaze what floods of glory streamed !
He saw the land of love and light, the home of the redeemed !
The pearly gates, the crystal sea, the universal hymn,
The sun-bright forms, the brilliant eyes that tears may never dim,
The healing trees, the fadeless flowers, the harpings of the blest,
In splendid vision to his soul revealed the promised rest !"—JOSEPHINE.



AND Paul did not die. Slowly, very, very slowly the life that had been so nearly quenched returned to his enfeebled frame. It was many days before the physician would give countenance to the hope his family felt, many weeks before he admitted that all danger of the relapse, which must necessarily have proved fatal, was past. But Paul never once wavered in his confidence, even in the midst of alarming prostration which shook the trust of every breast but his own.

It was long before he gave the reason of this ; but one day, when he had been unusually suffering, on awaking refreshed from a long sleep he found Madeline weeping silently beside him. For a time he watched her unseen, and then laying his hand on hers, he asked, " Are those tears for me, Madeline ?"

She started, and for answer knelt beside his couch, and laying her face beside his on the pillow, sobbed out, " O Paul, it would be doubly hard to lose thee now. Yet when I see thee so weak, so suffering, it seems selfish and cruel to seek to keep thee from thy rest."

"Thou needst not fear, sweet sister. I am not going to leave thee. And for the suffering, I know now what dear hand inflicts it, and the consciousness of it is often almost lost in the sweet sense of His presence and love—that love of which I shall yet live to testify. Of that I am sure. So calm thee, sweet one, and trust. A Father's hand will never strike one needless blow. And listen, Madeline: I will tell thee why I am so assured that this sickness is not unto death. I know you have all wondered at my confidence, and have perchance deemed it only a fevered fancy. But, Madeline, the night I came back to life from the gates of the grave, ay, from the very portals of the golden city, I had a wondrous dream, if dream indeed it were. Thou wilt remember Friedel's words. They touched a chord in my breast that had never wholly ceased to vibrate since I knew the fulness of God's love to me a sinner,—a rebel. How I longed to make known that love, to communicate the blessed light that had arisen in my darkened heart to others, words cannot tell. And in the few weeks of improved health that followed that blessed December night, bright hopes came to me that, perhaps,—sometime and somehow,—the Lord would use me in his service. For in his Word I read how he says, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness;' and how he has chosen the 'foolish things,' and 'weak things,' and 'base things,' and 'things that are despised,' to confound the mighty things of this world. And I knew the grace that had stooped to save so vile a thing as I, might well condescend to use it when it was saved. But then my illness came; and as it increased more and more my hopes faded, and at last I felt I must be content to take all he gave without being able to return him even one poor token of grateful love.

"He gave me my desire of seeing thy dear face once more, and Max and Friedel's. But even in full view of the eternal rest, a pang shot through my heart when I thought of the empty hands with which I should meet him. And then Friedel said, 'Thy wish may be granted thee even yet. He

who raised the four-days' dead has surely power to bring back from the gates of the grave.' But I was scarce willing to turn back then, rest seemed so near, so sweet.

"Then I suppose I slept, and in my sleep I seemed to be alone in a little boat that was borne smoothly, steadily on across a broad, dark river, by the resistless force of an unseen, mysterious current. Behind me were the slowly receding shores of our own lake, where you all stood weeping and watching, but making no effort to win me back; and opposite, far away over the dark glassy waters, shone a soft beam of pure and lovely light. Other boats were on the stream; some, like my own, crossing the river, others gliding swiftly down it. I saw the faces of some in those that passed close to me in their downward course, pale, and troubled, and agonized, and sometimes a sound as of distant wailings reached my ear as they disappeared into a black, impenetrable mist, that hid the further course of the flood. But mine drew ever nearer to that lovely light, and by degrees I could discern the glorious battlements of a golden city, then a shore of wondrous beauty, by whose crystal streams and beautiful groves groups of shining forms were gathered.

"As my boat approached, I saw others pass in before it; but none like mine,—*empty*.

"At last I reached the strand. Light was round me such as no summer sunshine ever made; and air, pure and fragrant with the odours of immortal flowers, wafted the sweet tones of heavenly music to my ears.

"And then, O Madeline, I have no words to tell thee of the glorious beauty of One who drew near as I was about to step on shore. 'Stay,' he said, as I would have thrown myself at his feet; 'thou art come, and thou art welcome, for I have loved thee long and well, and thou lovest me at last.'

"The wondrous grace and tenderness of the voice and words thrilled my heart, and I know not what I said; my poor stammering tongue seemed all too feeble to express the

passion of grateful adoring love with which my heart was bursting. But with a smile of infinite sweetness he answered, 'I know thou lovest me, therefore I would ask somewhat of thee. Look around at this fair land; it is thy everlasting home, the bright inheritance I bought for thee with my own life-blood. Within yon golden city are the many mansions of the Father's house, and amidst them the one thou lovedst best on earth awaits thee. Sickness comes not here, nor pain, nor sorrow, nor tears—nought that defiles enters—all is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. One step from thy little boat, and thou art here at once and for ever. Yet wilt thou, for my sake, return to a sad, and dark, and sinful world, and bring thy bark back well-laden with precious grain for my garner?'

"My eye fell on my empty boat, and my heart sank with shame and confusion.

"But again that blessed One continued: 'Nay, I chide thee not; thou art welcome as thou art—empty-handed. But in the darkness and gloom of earth precious souls for which I died are perishing, with none to tell them that I loved them and gave myself for them. They know me not. Thou dost know me; thou shalt know me better still. Speak; art thou willing, for my sake, to bear earth's burden until my next summons come? I bore the cross for thee.'

"'Lord,' I murmured, 'I am thine. Thou hast bought me. Do with me as thou wilt.'

"'Nay,' I thought he answered, 'the choice is thine: rest with me now, or a glad return, after a few more years of earthly toil and conflict, with a precious cargo of brands plucked from the burning,—perishing souls rescued from the kingdom of Satan, and brought to shine for ever as priceless jewels in my crown of immortal glory.'

"'Lord, I am a poor, helpless, crippled sufferer,—how can I do aught for thee?' I asked.

"'Leave that to me. Fear not, only trust; my strength is made perfect in weakness.'

“‘Then, Lord,’ I answered, while the tears fell fast, ‘I will choose the present loss for the future gain ; for the loss is mine, the gain will be thine.’

“‘*Thou wilt see,*’ he replied, with a smile of ineffable tenderness and beauty. ‘And when thou art tempted to doubt or fear, remember that the hand that sent thy bark back thus,’ (and he laid his hand—a pierced hand—upon my boat,) ‘was the one once nailed to Calvary’s cross for thee.’

“Then methought I was borne back over the dark, waveless tide ; the brightness faded, the lovely shore, the golden city, the shining figures by grove and stream, and, more than all, that glorious form in which were blent mysteries of majesty and loveliness, and such as poor human words are powerless to describe, faded from my sight. But as they did so, a voice, sweeter even than the celestial harmonies that were dying away on my ear, sounded clear and low beside me ; and it said : ‘Lo, I am with you alway. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’

“Then, Madeline, I opened my eyes on dear, watching faces gathered round my bed, and knew that what they watched for would not be,—that the day that was breaking in the eastern sky would be a beginning and not an end for me. How or when my work will be done, I know not. The time, and the way, and the strength are alike His. But that I shall live to do it, I am sure.”

Paul sank back exhausted with so much speaking, and Madeline sat silent, lost in awe and wonder ; but from that hour her fears for Paul ceased.

Very precious to her were the hours spent by his side, in the old familiar room. Sometimes it seemed as if the fifteen months spent at the Castle of Vaudemont were but a dream, so simple and natural seemed the resumption of the old life,—the old outer life, which was yet so marvellously, blessedly blended with a new inner one.

Those months had left their traces on each familiar face.

The father's ruddy cheek had become haggard,—his stalwart form shrunken and bent,—his locks scanty and white,—his step feeble and uncertain,—his voice subdued and broken. Stern of manner and reserved of speech he would ever be, but there was a change in him rather to be felt than described. It was not only that his failing strength rendered him more dependent upon his children's care and tenderness; a principle was at work within him that never fails to soften the most rugged nature,—the love of God in Christ shed abroad in the heart. The loving words, spoken by what he then believed to be a bed of death, had sunk deep into his heart, and he had since lost no opportunity of learning more of the blessed truths of the gospel. He was not a man to rest satisfied with half measures; and no sooner was he convinced that Ulric Zwingle was a preacher of pure truth, than he gave him the right hand of fellowship, and, as we have seen, the reformer became a constant and welcome visitor at his house. The wonderful change in Paul after his reception of the new doctrines, had much effect in deepening the father's conviction of their Divine origin; and in nothing was the change in him more manifest than in the tenderness with which he treated his afflicted son, and the meekness with which he received the new lessons of God's truth and grace Paul was ever learning from the precious pages of inspiration.

Clare had sprung up into slight, fragile growth; the rosy, childish beauty of her face, had deepened into a delicate, spiritual loveliness, that often made Madeline recall Paul's words, "Her place seems among the angels," and fear lest so fair a flower should be too pure and fragile for earth's storms and shadows. She was so gentle and loving, so pure and true in all her ways; her guileless heart seemed to have no place for aught but love, and tenderness, and pity, while her sensitive spirit shrank timidly before the slightest shade of displeasure or reproof in those she loved. And her young heart rested upon the dear Saviour she had so early learned to know and love with simple unwavering confidence, such as she had once placed in her dear lost mother.

Between her and Gerold von Knonau there existed a strong tie of mutual affection. In her loneliness during the past year Clare had found in Gerold a patient, tender, sympathizing friend ; one ever ready to share her little griefs and perplexities, to soothe her sorrows, and help her difficulties. And, what was even more to her, he would talk to her of the Lord Jesus, and tell her new, wonderful words, out of God's holy Book. So with all the innocent confidingness of her nature and her age she clung to the noble, manly boy ; who, in return, lavished upon her the most gentle tenderness and protecting care. Even the return of her beloved Madeline had no power to dislodge Gerold from his own peculiar place in her gentle heart.

Max was little altered ; still the same impulsive, warm-hearted, but often wrong-headed youth. Friedel was even gentler and graver than of old, but the perplexed expression was for the most part gone from his face, and there was a happy calm in his pale, thoughtful countenance. Both had openly embraced the new doctrines, each in a way characteristic of his nature. Max eagerly and recklessly ; Friedel slowly, thoughtfully. And Madeline noticed, that while Friedel delighted to speak most of the glorious triumph of truth over error, and of the precious doctrines of the gospel, and shrank back with pain from any thought of innovation or change, Max was ever railing at the corruptions and abuses that had crept into the Church, and thus extended, like a festering sore, into the political and social constitutions of nations and countries—eager for a thorough and practical reform in ceremonial as well as belief, and impatient with what seemed to him the sluggishness and cowardice of the noble men whom God was leading, step by step, in his own divinely appointed way.

Bertha alone was unchanged ; except, indeed, that she was graver and colder than ever, and that the lines of her worn, rigid face, were harder and more firmly set. Sometimes Madeline thought there was added gloom in eye and brow, and she felt sadly sure that the healing balm of Christ's love had not as

yet fallen upon that strangely repressed heart. But it was so difficult to penetrate the chilling atmosphere of reserve in which she enveloped herself, and she always quietly repelled any attempt to do so. Poor Bertha ! Madeline knew well that under this seeming coldness throbbed a poor, bruised, hungry, unresting heart, and her own yearned over it.

Daily Madeline herself was learning more of the precious suitability of the gospel of God's grace to supply every need and meet every case. In the pulpits, in the lecture-halls, in the students' rooms, in the streets and market-places, as well as at the social board and round the domestic hearth, one topic was discussed at that time in Zurich. The trumpet-peal, first sounded in the abbey-church of Einsiedeln, had rung far and wide, and from all parts of Switzerland its echoes reverberated. Words of burning eloquence and spiritual power, preached to overflowing congregations in the great cathedral of Zurich, were borne like precious seeds into busy towns and quiet mountain valleys. From all parts words of encouragement, of hope, of brotherly greeting, came to the intrepid preacher from those who had long been watching for the day-star to arise.

And he had need of these ; for mingling with the general acclamations were the deep undertones which Zwingli too well understood to be those of a gathering storm. But he had counted the cost. "Our name is written in indelible characters in the register of citizenship on high," he had said ; "I am ready to die for Christ."

Sweet and strange it was to Madeline, to hear the voice that had lately thundered through the great cathedral aisles speak tender words of Christian love by Paul's couch, or join in the innocent merriment of the family circle. At first her natural timidity had kept her aloof, but the frank manners and winning affability that, joined to Christian meekness and natural vivacity, won all hearts that came under their influence, soon made her as much at ease with the reformer as were the rest of her family.

Paul's love for him was deep and strong ; and as by degrees his health was sufficiently restored to admit of the family-circle gathering in his room, many a happy hour was spent there by him whom he regarded with the peculiar, reverent affection, due to a spiritual father.

The intimacy between Zwingle and the Reinhardts was greatly increased by the intense affection he had conceived for Gerold Meyer von Knonau. A tender care for the young of his flock, and an affection for little children, were marked traits in the reformer's gentle and noble character. The loss of Oswald Myconius, Gerold's beloved master and Zwingle's most faithful friend, who, in pursuance of the dictates of duty and conscience, had accepted the post of master of the college-school at Lucerne, his native town, was amply made up to Gerold by the fatherly interest and affection which he had aroused in the great heart of Ulric Zwingle. With such a friend and teacher, Gerold's noble character and talents could scarcely fail to develop rapidly ; and Zwingle, worn-out with incessant labours in preaching and study, often gladly sought relaxation in the Reinhardts' bright family-circle, or in Gerold's quiet but happy home.

Sometimes he would bring his lute, and sing to it some of his own Christian poems, to airs of his own composition. His fondness for music was made matter of grave accusation against him by his enemies ; and the genial vivacity of his temperament formed a basis for many a dark and cruel imputation. Those who judged Zwingle thus, little knew of the joy-giving properties of the precious gospel of God's grace, the glad tidings of great joy, the blessed message that came down straight from the heart of God to bring light and gladness to a dark and sorrowful world. Satan's lie had long taken the place of God's truth. By representing God as a jealous Depriver rather than as a bounteous Bestower, he wrought man's ruin, and closed the gates of Eden against him ; by turning Christ's light and easy yoke of grace and love into a heavy burden of joyless and legal bond-

age, he still seeks to blind men's eyes and harden their hearts against the glorious and finished salvation that has been bought for them—if they will but take it as it is offered, “without money and without price”—“Peace that passeth understanding,” “joy that no man taketh away” even here, and a sure inheritance of a brighter portion in a fairer Eden above. So true is it that “godliness”—the possession and following of God in all he has done for us, and in all he is to us—is “profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

How often do we admit that the sunshine seems brighter, the glad earth fairer, its leaves and flowers greener and more fragrant, in the first sweet consciousness of happy and requited love. And if frail and imperfect, and too often, alas! swiftly-changing, human love has power thus felt and owned to give added brightness to the life of the heart on which it falls, how much more the blessed knowledge of that love that changeth not, that is always fresh and new, that “passeth knowledge” now, that will still leave depths to sound through all eternity. Yet men, with weary, empty, hungry hearts, shrink from God's blessed gospel as a gloomy thing, as a thing that will shut out all gladness and pleasure from their lives for evermore! Oh! darkest, and deadliest, and cruelest of all Satan's dark, and deadly, and cruel lies, is that which deludes poor, needy, helpless, perishing sinners into regarding God's glad tidings of great joy as the proclamation of a dreary code of joyless and oppressive laws; into deeming the hard bondage of Egypt, under his own tyrant rule, easier and lighter than the free-will service of a ransomed host amid the vines and fig-trees of Canaan.

Very happy were those autumn days to Madeline, Paul, and Clare. Paul still suffered much; the fever had left his head so weak that he could read very little, study not at all, and it seemed hard to realize that any life-work could be his, except the gentle submissive suffering of God's will that already had borne testimony to many a heart—which had sunk deeper even

than the few loving words that he never failed to speak to all who visited him. And, except in times of special suffering, he no longer shrank from intercourse with all who came to the house. Indeed, he rather courted it. And Madeline and the others often wondered at the rich stores of Scripture truth that had been laid up in his mind during the few months, or rather weeks, when he had been able to dig that precious mine for himself. Even Zwingle often marvelled at the quick response to opinions, at which he himself had only arrived after long and prayerful research, that he met with from the crippled boy. Yet well he knew the reason! "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "And they shall be all taught of God."

When Paul was able to bear it, Friedel or Gerold would read to him and Madeline and Clare—sometimes also to the father and Bertha—from the pages of life, sealed as yet to all who could not read them in the original; and daily, from the glorious panorama thus gradually unfolding to their view, they learned more of the truth of God, more of God himself. All, it seemed, but Bertha, and—Madeline sometimes feared—Max.

When she spoke of this fear to Paul, he answered, "I think thou art right, Madeline; there is something wanting in Max. And that something is everything—for it is Christ."

"But, Paul," she replied, "he believes about the Lord Jesus—about his being the only Saviour; and thou knowest how indignant he is that all that He is, and all that He has done, have been lost sight of all these years; how eager he is that all that is contrary to His doctrine should be swept away at once; how full of hope and trust in the conquest of the truth. Only yesterday, thou knowest how hotly he argued against the cowardice of not at once casting aside practices that, he said, were all of man's making, with Master Zwingle. But I think it is this very heat and violence that frightens me. And he appears to dwell rather on the dark and evil things the light of truth reveals, than on the rich, sweet blessings it brings."

"It is even so, Madeline," Paul answered. "Max looks upon the truth rather as a sword wherewith to combat error, than as a precious balm to heal sin-sick souls. It is both, doubtless. And to us, shut in from the conflict of the outer world, it is chiefly precious as the latter. But I fear it is rather deliverance from ecclesiastical corruption, and priestly tyranny, and social and political oppression, than from the guilt and bondage of sin, that Max contends for; an outer and temporal, rather than an inward and spiritual reform, for which he is striving. Dost thou not see that the fiery writings of the poet-knight, Ulrich von Hütten, are more in accordance with his taste than the pure, deep writings of Luther, or the Christ-like teachings of Zwingli; that the stinging satires and bold denunciations with which the press teems, awake echoes in the heart which the sweet words of Christ leave unstirred?"

"O Paul, thou thinkest then that Max loves not the dear Lord Christ?"

"I think, Madeline, Max has yet to learn the gospel alphabet. He loves not, because he knows not. He knows not, because he has never yet learned his weakness and need. It is not enough to come to Christ as a citizen and as a Swiss. It must be as weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin—as a sinner; and it is written, 'This man receiveth sinners. O Madeline, how can we thank him that he has brought us both through sore need and pain to rest upon him—himself! It is he that saves; doctrine never will!'"

Tears filled Madeline's eyes. "It grieves me," she said. "Oh, I thought we all loved Him; unless, indeed, poor Bertha Friedel does, I am sure."

"Yes, Madeline; dost thou not remember how Friedel answered Max when he told exultingly how Hütten had written to Luther, 'We must have swords, bows, javelins, and bullets, to destroy the fury of the devil;' and how the nobility of Germany, with the gallant Franz von Sickingen at their head, were ready to rise for the defence of the truth?"

"Ah, yes; he said, 'It is God's battle, Max, in which he needs not our poor carnal weapons. It is in men's hearts he seeks to establish his kingdom; and the only weapons that succeed in that war are his Word and his Spirit. It is not by fields of blood and death that the gospel of his love can be taught to the poor, perishing sinners, over whom his great heart yearns with such mighty tenderness. Our confidence must be in Christ's word, and work, and blood, for victory over the wiles and power of Satan, as in the salvation of our souls. He is worthy of all our trust.' And his face was lit up with the sweet, full smile, which ever comes over it when he speaks of the dear Lord's love.

"Madeline, sometimes I think the two ways will be tried. I, lying here, listening to the echoes of the busy life without, have leisure to weigh things well and calmly, and I think we are on the verge of a mighty conflict. When the Lord begins a work he will continue it, and it will lead further than thou thinkest; further I am sure than those think who are now carrying it on, seeing only a step at a time before them. The walls, and towers, and buttresses of error, slowly grown to giant size through ages of darkness, during which men have been Satan's bond-slaves, gradually undermined by God's resistless truth, would doubtless fall in God's good time. But men will not wait for it. I fear me other swords will be drawn than the only one adapted for such a warfare—the two-edged sword of God's Word. Already hot, impatient spirits, strangers, like our Max, to the spirit of love that breathes in the gospel message, speak of drawing the temporal sword in Germany; and thou knowest how hotly Max talks of winning with it spiritual freedom for our own country."

"Paul, when I hear of these things they frighten me. It seems a terrible thing to trample down all that has been deemed most holy for ages; and it seems to me that Ulrich Zwingle is ready to tread in the steps of Luther. Thou knowest how warmly he applauds his boldness in attacking the

Papacy, and how he interceded with the Papal legate, Des Faucons, against the bull of excommunication about to be passed against him. O Paul, suppose in these things we are mistaken! Why cannot the precious gospel be preached, and these things let alone?"

"Because, dear Madeline, light and darkness cannot exist together—truth must reveal error. Fear not. God can and will take care of his own—his own truth and his own people. And taking his unerring Word as our guide, we cannot go wrong. That pure fountain has been sealed for ages, and only a few drops allowed to trickle down to us through earthen channels. No wonder error and confusion have reigned."

"But it is opened now, Paul."

"Opened! thank God, yes. Still not to all, to each. O Madeline, what a glorious task it would be to give that blessed Word to the people, in our own familiar tongue! It will be done. And the man to whom God gives that task will do more for the cause of truth than could the mightiest of earth's princes, were he to devote every resource of his kingdom to the work; for it would bring the true knowledge of God, as he is, not as men and Satan represent him, into every household."

"I think thou art right," said Madeline, after a pause. "To have all the blessed Bible in our own simple, homely words, like those psalms of Luther, would indeed be a precious boon. To be able to read it one's-self at any time, one could scarcely know perplexity then; for it is wonderful how provision seems made in it for every need. Paul, might not this be thy work? Thou art weak yet, I know, but thou wilt be stronger; and thou art so clever. Already thou readest Greek better even than Gerold. O Paul! if—"

But she broke off suddenly, for the flush of colour that had rushed to Paul's wan cheek and transparent forehead faded again, leaving them white as marble.

"O Madeline," he said at last, "if it might be! if it might be! But I dare not hope it."

"May it not be the work He sent thee back to do?"

"That I know not. Ah, Madeline, when shall I be able to do aught for Him who has done so much for me?"

"When thou art stronger, dear Paul."

"Nay, when His time comes. All I can do now is to wait and to trust. And when Satan whispers, as he often does, 'What canst thou do, what use art thou?' and days and weeks pass by and leave me helpless here,—to remember that the hand that sent my bark back to earth was the one pierced for me, and the one that rules the universe, and therefore one that will not inflict one needless pang—one that cannot err."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A VEIL LIFTED.

“ Oh ! eyes that ache with the burden
Of tears that ye may not shed ;
Oh ! lips that close on cry of pain
For love and hope long dead ;
There is One who knows the anguish
Of longing that will not sleep,—
There is One who toucheth softly
Wounds that are lying deep.”—HETTY BOWMAN.

BETWEEN Zurich, the chief city of the Confederation, and now through the presence and labours of Zwingle become the centre of the Reformation in Switzerland, and Basle—whither the learned of all nations had resorted since the establishment of Frobenius's printing-press had made it a focus of light and learning—there was constant communication. Thus it was that during the summer and autumn months Madeline heard more frequently from Muriel von Ohrendorf than might have been expected at a period when intercourse between absent friends was necessarily difficult and uncertain. And what she did hear had been a source of deep happiness to her. Muriel wrote brightly and happily, even while affectionately lamenting the blank left in her life by the departure of her sister-friend ; and Madeline hoped that that blank had taught her to depend more fully upon the love and sympathy of that ever-present Friend, who had challenged the world to find greater love than his own—the love that laid down life itself for its most unworthy objects.

The Lady Ermengarde had been induced to pay a visit to her husband's castle of Ohrendorf, on her way to the baths at Baden, where the Count Raymond had joined them, with Guy de Montmédi, a young Provençal noble with whom he had formed a warm friendship. But Madeline little knew how much the absence of Muriel's ordinary morbid depression and fearfulness of life's joy was due to the absence of Agnes, who had slipped down the stone stair of one of the castle turrets on the eve of their departure, and who, though not seriously injured, had been incapacitated from accompanying her lady.

Yet something of the old trembling fear appeared, as she spoke of the lengths to which the monk Luther, with whom her brother and the young Count Guy de Montmédi sympathized so heartily, was going. The young Charles of Burgundy and Spain had been elected Emperor on the 28th of June, and Luther had addressed a letter to him (which, however, had met with no reply), beseeching him to favour the cause of truth; and in an appeal to the Emperor and nobility of Germany, he had violently denounced the abuses of the Papacy. Dangers were thickening round him; he lived in constant expectation of assassination or martyrdom. But much was hoped from the young Emperor, who, it was thought, was favourable to the much-needed reform.

All this troubled and perplexed Muriel. That many abuses and much wickedness was carried on under the cloak of the old religion, she could not ignore; that Luther preached a clearer, purer truth than had been taught by the Church, she was ready to admit. "But is it not like a child boldly and insolently attacking a parent's faults," she said, "thus to hold up to the world's contempt and ridicule the evils that wicked, faithless men, have introduced into our holy, spotless mother, the blessed, adorable Church? O Madeline, my heart is oft troubled and afraid; yet that the evil should be cast out is certainly right, and that we should know the blessed gospel of God must be right too. And that, Raymond says, is all Luther

and those like him want. I am perplexed, Madeline ; but I do not forget what thou hast taught me, and I trust to the leading of the Good Shepherd."

At Baden, Muriel heard Ulric Zwingle preach : he had gone thither for the benefit of his health in the autumn. And they had spent a few days in Basle on their return from Ohrendorf, where Hedio was preaching the gospel with great power and acceptance. Yet in nothing had Muriel found such help and profit, she wrote, as in the simple, trustful words of Madeline's uncle, Andrew Reinhardt. All her perplexities and all her fears melted like snow before them. "It made me think of thee, Madeline, to listen to him," she said ; "he made me feel that God was so near to us ; near, not to judge, not to condemn, but to love, to help, and to save. And he bade me remember, above all things, that 'God is love.'"

This letter, written from Basle, was the last Madeline was to receive for many months, but it left her rejoicing that the clouds had passed from her friend's soul, and that the Sun of righteousness was shining upon it, with healing in his wings.

The interest felt by all, especially by Paul and Clare, in all connected with Vaudemont, was naturally great, and from Madeline they first learned the strange, sad story of their mother's infancy. When she first told that other and still sadder episode in her life to Bertha, she was surprised to find that she already knew it. "Yes," she had answered in reply to Madeline's surprised inquiry, "she told me of it herself, when my trouble came upon me. But she never alluded to it again. It was best, she said, to keep an old wound that could never quite heal covered up and out of sight. Examining it only made it throb afresh. And she was right."

"Did she speak thus, Bertha ? And that old wound was ever there, bleeding in secret even while she seemed so calmly, gently happy. Oh, mother, mother !" and Madeline's tears fell. But she soon looked up with a tearful smile. "Well, that wound is healed now. God has wiped away all tears from

her eyes. He says he will do so. O Bertha, dearest, he would heal that wound of thine, that will not bear looking upon, if thou wouldst but open thy heart to his love."

Bertha's sad face grew dark, and she made no answer. But as Madeline looked up into it, and thought how sore must be the secret aching that had robbed it of all its youthfulness and bloom, her heart yearned over her. Yet how could she comfort her, when it seemed useless to tell her of the only comfort worth the name? Upon her ears fell the same words that made other hearts thrill with joy and gratitude; for she frequently attended the sermons and lectures of Zwingle, and she was, of course, present in their happy evening gatherings, in which the conversation so frequently turned upon the one great theme. Yet she ever sat, busy with her knitting or sewing, with no trace of emotion visible on her calm, set face, listening perhaps, but taking no part, and apparently feeling no interest. Sometimes, indeed, a troubled, wistful look, would sweep across her face when Paul spoke to her; but his were the only words that seemed to have any influence.

So Madeline sat and watched the stern, settled face, that bent so intently over her work, with tearful, loving eyes. Her memory went back to that evening long ago, when she had found Bertha in that agony of weeping in her mother's deserted room. She remembered how she had resolved then never to think of her grave, reserved sister, as really hard and cold again, but to set herself with patient affection to thaw the ice of reserve with the gentle beams of sisterly love and sympathy. But other interests had come in, and she felt how the contrast with the sensitive, enthusiastic, clinging Muriel had operated in Bertha's disfavour—that since she had returned she had found little place for Bertha among the varied interests that filled the dear home life. And when she thought how amidst all the sunshine round them she still dwelt in the same dreary, chilling shadow, the pity of her heart overcame every other feeling, and rising, she threw her arms round her sister, sobbing out, "O

Bertha, dearest Bertha, I cannot bear to see thee look so grave and sad, as if all the sunshine of thy life were gone for ever. O dear sister, why wilt thou not come to the dear Saviour, who knows so well how sore is the aching of thy poor heart, who has love and sympathy that can reach to the deepest and most secret wound? I know it can. Nay, Bertha, do not shake thy head thus hopelessly. Who can see Paul as he is, so full of joy and peace in the midst of his suffering, and doubt the power of Christ's love to bring brightness into the darkest lot? And when our mother died, Bertha, I thought I never could be happy more; and now I feel as if I never could be really miserable again. For grief is not misery, and his love never fails or changes. Bertha, Bertha, why wilt thou not try it?"

The work dropped from Bertha's trembling fingers as Madeline thus pleaded with her in tones of impassioned eagerness. "I cannot," she said in an anguished voice—"I cannot. Oh! that I could!" and she buried her face in her hands with a kind of moan that went to Madeline's heart.

"Thou canst not, Bertha! What is it that thou canst not do? Hast thou not learned that God asks nothing of us, no strivings, no doings—only to believe in the Lord Christ's finished work for our salvation, and to trust in his great love?"

"Yes, I have learned that, Madeline." But there was no hope in the quiet, bitter tone.

"Yet thou art not happy, dear Bertha. Good tidings rejoice us not unless we believe them. If we are hungry, gazing at a rich feast will not satisfy. Listening only to the fountain's sweet murmur cannot quench our thirst. O Bertha, believe the gospel is God's dear message to thee—trust him who died for thee on earth, who loves thee still in heaven!"

"Believe! trust! Madeline, I might have done so once, long years ago. But faith and trust died out of my heart and left it hard and cold; and now all that was good and true in it has been withered and dried up out of it by long and bitter aching."

"The more need thou hast then of his pity, his grace, his love.

They are for all, Bertha. Thou knowest his own words, Come unto me, *all* ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Surely they suit thee."

"But I cannot come to him. I tell you, Madeline, I *cannot* believe, I *cannot* trust. And with every call, every promise, every privilege of the gospel is linked that one word—that one condition, 'Believe.' Harder ten thousandfold to fulfil than vow, or pilgrimage, or vigil!"

"O Bertha!"

"It may not be so to thee, with thy young, fresh, trustful heart. It is not so with the hundreds to whom this new doctrine has brought gladness and peace. But it is so to me; I, with my cold, blighted, withered heart, could fulfil all the forms and duties that were used to be thought the means of winning our soul's salvation."

"But they did not satisfy thy heart, Bertha?"

"No, truly."

"And the love of Christ does—fully, sweetly. And, O Bertha, thou dost believe that this new way, as people call it, is the old, old way,—the way the blessed apostles taught, the way in which the holy saints and martyrs walked; for it is Christ, and he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thou hast said so!"

"Yes; I will tell thee, Madeline. Thou knowest, I think, how I used, in my heart, to despise the things that seemed to me so childish, so meaningless, which I knew to be so empty. I could not believe that the mighty God who made this wonderful earth, and stretched over it the glorious canopy of heaven, could take pleasure in such mummeries as many of the rites of religion seemed to me. And when the new doctrines were first preached, I felt sure that in them the much-needed light was coming. To the world, I mean, not to me. But when I lay helpless on my bed, and Sister Elizabeth watched over me, I learned first how different was God's gospel from man's. It was very sweet to lie there and listen while she told those

beautiful gospel stories of which Clare is so fond. And sometimes, Madeline, in those days it almost seemed as if my heart would melt, and that I should learn to love and trust once more. But I recovered; Sister Elizabeth went back to her convent, I to my old self—and to a harder, colder self than ever. For do I not know that God gave his *best*, his well-beloved Son to die for us? do I not know how tender, how loving, how gracious that Son is?—yet I cannot love him, I cannot believe him, and I cannot trust him.”

“But, Bertha dear, how dost thou know this, if thou dost not believe it? Thou dost believe it, only thou keepest probing into that poor, dark heart of thine, instead of leaving all to the mighty, fathomless love of the great heart of light and life and love above, whose infinite depths eternity itself will not be able to exhaust. Ah! when I first sank into those everlasting arms, I feared they might fail me; but they never will, they never can. Closer and firmer and stronger will grow their clasp, the more heavily and restfully we lean upon them, the more we learn our utter weakness and need of their support. Oh! do give thyself up to them. Thou art looking at trusting, at believing, as at a work to be done, as a something the most difficult of all others for thee to perform. And believing is just doing nothing—a leaving all to him who has done everything for thee. And until thou dost that, thou makest him who laid down his life for thee, whether thou wilt accept his sacrifice or not, a deceiver, a false promiser. O Bertha, there is enough of ingratitude in this dark, sinful world, without thine to swell the sum. And he loves thee so! He pities thee so!”

Bertha's face was again hidden upon her hands, and her tears fell fast through her trembling fingers. Madeline wound her arms round her, and mingled her own with them. At last she said, “Thou wilt, dear Bertha?”

But again Bertha answered, “I cannot, Madeline, I cannot; my heart is dead, cold and hard as any stone. I know thou canst not understand—God grant thou never mayst—how the

ashes of a dead faith choke the growth of all that is lovely and pure in the heart."

"But it was an earthly faith that failed thee, Bertha. Oh! forgive me if I touch thee where perhaps I should not; but if thy poor clay-idol broke, a living, loving Saviour can never, never fail thee."

"If I could but trust him," she moaned. "But with the fall of that clay-idol went all the power of my heart to trust."

"Still thy trust, thy heart, Bertha; it is with his faithfulness and his heart thou hast to do."

But again a silence fell. This time Bertha broke it. "Madeline," she said, "I will tell thee all. Thou wilt understand me better then. Thou thinkest our mother's early grief a bitter one. It was such. Yet when she told it me, that I might learn how such things might be, and yet, in God's good mercy, not wholly darken the lives upon which they fell, it seemed as nothing to mine. For Bertrand de Chatillon died for her he loved so faithfully and well. On the bright memory of his pure and tried affection no shadow could ever rest. In his early grave he was still hers, hers only. And had he, whose name may never pass my lips again, died thus, my heart might have broken, indeed, but never withered thus; and I might still have hoped and trusted. But he did not die, Madeline; he deceived me, he broke his faith—he, on whose truth and devotedness I would fearlessly have staked my soul!"

Bertha's tears had ceased, and she sat with her fingers tightly interlaced, and a terrible bitterness on her pale, rigid face, and in her dark, fixed eyes. Madeline replied only by a mute gesture of sympathy, and her sister continued:—

"I was very young, Madeline, much younger than thou art; but girl as I was, I loved with all the depth and fervour of womanhood, as well as with the blind, passionate trust of youth. He whom I thus loved—of whom for long years I have never spoken, not even to her of whose tender sympathy I was so well assured—seemed worthy of it all. Ay! more than worthy

Even now, when I recall those looks and tones, apparently so full of purest, holiest affection,—the noble features and broad open brow upon which truth seemed indelibly stamped,—the high aspirations and tender solemn vows of unchanging love to which I so often listened in those happy twilight hours when the pale stars were shimmering faintly in the soft gray evening sky, and the delicate petals of the pear-blossoms were falling round us like glistening snowflakes as we sat together on the old garden-seat,—it seems like some hideous dream that *he* could be false.

“That was just before he went away, when at last we knew what each was to the other. We had been playmates in childhood and friends in youth. O Madeline, how weak are these poor hearts!—the past, the dead lost past, which I have taken so much pains to bury out of my sight, lives again for me when I mark Gerold and Clare together. As they are now, so were we in our early youthful days. But *he* was poor, no meet match for the wealthy merchant’s daughter, I suppose people thought, and he had ever been a constant visitor at our house, so our names were never coupled together. This has been a boon to me in enabling me to keep my bitter secret safe. To be pointed at in gossiping pity, would have been the one drop too much in a cup that needed no added gall. He was poor, I said, and the father would not hear of our betrothal until he raised himself to competency, if not to wealth. But he, too, believed in him, and the mother loved him; and we were young, and could afford to trust and wait. Ah, how fully I believed it! How bright with hope the future gleamed!

“We parted. The quiet twilight stars witnessed our last troth-pledge under the rustling boughs of the old pear-tree, our usual trysting-place, and his upturned face seemed to me like an angel’s in beauty and holy truthfulness, in the pale, pure evening light, as he called Him who made them and us to witness that no earthly power should ever break the troth we had pledged that night before Him. The *two* halves of

the coin we broke together lie now in my cabinet's secret drawer!

"He went to study in the various schools of art in Flanders and Germany and Italy, for his dream was artist fame; and I waited, and watched, and trusted. At first came letters, at long intervals indeed, but as often as opportunity served, gladdening my heart with the deep, deep love they breathed, the bright sweet hopes they kindled. But after a time they changed, and grew short and few; their tone became constrained and cold, the very writing altered. But I told myself it was the reaction of over-wrought nerves and imagination, both taxed by close application to his noble art. He had been engaged to paint some altar-pieces for a large convent at Antwerp, and at first he had dwelt upon this as a probable road to fame and *me*. But his last letters were vague, and filled with strange religious fervour.

"Then came a time of dreary, silent waiting. Yet not once did I doubt, not once did I dream that he could change. But one day, one who knew him here and in Flanders brought me a packet. It contained his troth-plight, the broken silver piece, and a few short, cold lines, in which he took leave of me—for ever."

"And did he give no reason, no excuse?"

"He gave none. But Kaspar Nordeck told me enough. He had wedded an Italian bride. Now, Madeline, thou wilt marvel less that for me, over all the love, and friendship, and beauty of this earth, is cast a chilling veil of suspicion and doubt. If such utter falsehood could wear so fair a mien of nobleness and truth, how may we know the true?"

"My poor, poor Bertha, thou hast indeed suffered sorely. And was this all? Didst thou hear no more?"

"Never more."

"And there could be no error, no strange mistake? Such things have been."

"None; oh, none; it was only too clear. It is years since

I have looked at the lines that were traced on the paper that contained the broken troth-plight, but they were burned in on my very heart. 'Farewell,'—the hand in which mine had lain so confidently when that solemn troth was pledged had written, 'Farewell, Bertha ! The struggle is over at last. I yield thee back thy troth. May God forgive me and comfort thee. Perhaps, when years have passed, there may come a time when we may think of each other without sin in our prayers. Mayst thou be happy. One only could have come between me and thee. From my last letter thou wilt know who that is. Farewell for ever !' "

"Bertha, Bertha, tell me no more if it distresses thee thus !" exclaimed Madeline ; for the words came slow and gaspingly from Bertha's lips, whitened to ashy paleness, while her hands were clinched as if with keen physical anguish. "Oh ! it was hard, it was cruel !"

"It was hard, it was cruel, Madeline. But I will tell thee all, and then cover up the old wound again ; its quick throbbings will soon die down to the dull, dead aching that death alone will wholly cure. That last letter, received many months before, did indeed explain all, though in the fulness of my blind trust I had read it without a shadow on my spirit. In it he had told me of a lovely Italian girl, Francesca Giorno, the daughter of an old fresco painter, who resided near the monastery where he was employed. She had wonderful artist talent, and rare beauty, besides the most winning sweetness of disposition ; and he dwelt much on the dangers that awaited one so young and fair and gifted, a stranger and alone in a foreign land, when her father's mortal illness should terminate in death.

"I listened calmly to what Kaspar had to tell, and then bade him never mention the subject more. All my youth's freshness, all the beauty of my life, had gone from me in one short hour. I did not sink outwardly. I was young and strong, and pride came to my aid. The mother alone knew that the stroke had pierced my heart to its core. I have heard people marvel

sometimes at the quick fading of my youthful bloom, at the strange contradiction of my sunny girlhood's promise in my grave and early womanhood. But that bitter memory of ill-requited trust and slighted love has been as a canker at my heart, shrivelling and contracting it month by month, and year by year, till only enough life is left to feel the pain of death."

"Dear, dear Bertha, thou art unjust to thyself; thy cruel wrong and suffering have indeed warped thy judgment and repressed thy heart's deep sympathies. But, dearest sister, thou art not loveless to us who know thy worth. Thou dost trust *me*, Bertha?"

The hot tears rushed to Bertha's burning eyes as she met the gentle, pleading face. "Trust thee, thou sweet one! yes," she murmured. "The ties of blood are firm and strong; but I could scarce doubt *thee*, were there not such between us."

"And is there no tie of blood between thee and Him who shed his own for thee? O Bertha, my precious sister, thy deep, true, earthly love was given in vain, was slighted and cast off as a worthless thing, at what cost He who loves, and pities, and understands the poor quivering hearts he himself made alone knows. And wilt thou serve him the same? Wilt thou cast aside the hand that would wipe away thy tears, reject the yearning love of a heart that will never fail thee, never disappoint thee?"

Bertha's tears fell thick and fast, a heavy overflowing shower from a sorely burdened heart. "I will try not," she said; "but, O Madeline, there is something here that cannot, will not rest," and she pressed her hands to her heart. "And now leave me, dearest. I would be alone. And let all this be as though it had never been spoken. My secret is safe with thee, I know. But when thou prayest, Madeline, remember it and me."

It is needless to say how faithfully Madeline complied with her sister's request, with what tender reverence she guarded the secret she alone shared. With the delicate instinct of true sympathy, she never by word or look sought to recall the confi-

dence that had passed between them, and Bertha relapsed into her usual grave reserve. But Madeline thought there was a slight, undefinable difference, an almost imperceptible softening of the hard lines of lip and brow, and less of bitterness in voice and manner, even when speaking of things which were wont to call forth such cutting irony. So Madeline hoped and prayed, and left the healing of that life-wound to Him who came "to heal the broken-hearted," in simple faith that He who was able was also willing.

But it was a great joy when one day Bertha said, in her usual quick, abrupt manner, "Madeline, thou mayst tell Paul what I told thee. I cannot. Tell him, but bid him never speak of it. God may hear his prayers and thine."

After that weeks and months passed on, and no change was perceptible in Bertha. The tender words of gospel love apparently awoke no response in her heart; it even appeared that she shrank from hearing them. Madeline would have been discouraged, had not Paul been ever ready with words of hope and comfort. "He bore with me," he would say; "he sought, and watched, and waited. With him it is always '*until he find it*.' There will come a day when Bertha will say with me, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Never can I despair of the salvation of any sinner, however hardened in unbelief—the healing of any heart-wound, however deep; for he saved *me*. He healed mine!"

When striving to realize the bitter pain Bertha must have suffered in finding what she believed to be so nobly true, so wholly, utterly false, Madeline often recalled the pain she had felt that night in Basle, when she was constrained to believe the bright, clear eye, and open brow, and knightly courtesy of her deliverer, had been the mask worn by the false and profligate Rupert von Berlach to suit his own base purposes. She remembered still the thrill of joy and relief she had experienced when she had failed to recognize him in that nobleman on her way to Vaudemont.

She had not been able to convince her Aunt Katterin that she had mistaken her protector's identity, though she had recounted her further adventure the day she stayed at Basle on her homeward journey. Indeed, the good lady was somewhat irritated at her pertinacity. "I am not apt to make such blunders, child," she said, with asperity. "And the knight who brought thee to the door was most undoubtedly Rupert von Berlach. I should know him among a thousand. It is no wonder thou couldst not recognize him in the open daylight—the darkness and confusion and terror of thy first meeting might well account for that. However, it signifies not now. And it is said that the Count has become altogether another man since he heard Luther preach."

Madeline said no more; but she thought the probabilities of mistake lay most on her aunt's side. It had been a confused glimpse by the uncertain light of a lantern that had decided *her*; but it was *not* dark when she herself met the knight in the river-meadows; and she had had ample time to observe him, when she was neither confused nor terrified, before they parted near the city gate. Besides, the voices were so unlike.

And it *did* signify to Madeline. For that gallant, gentle youth, was her ideal of all that was knightly, and noble, and generous, and true. With his image she linked all Lady Ermenгарde's stories of old romance and chivalry, and—in a strange, undefinable way—her mother's noble lover, Bertrand de Chatillon. Lady Ermengarde had told her, when she saw her Raymond she might picture Bertrand. But Madeline smiled to herself to think how difficult it would be to dissociate him from her own ideal. And yet no thought, no hope, no wish even to meet the latter in the flesh again, ever presented itself to her mind. He was only to her pure, simple, innocent heart what the Sir Galahads and Sir Tristrams of old romance were, and *are*, to the youthful dreamers of an after-day.

CHAPTER XXV.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST.

"And allight, withal, may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever ;—it may be a sound,
A tone of music."—BYRON.



THE winter of 1520 set in with unusual severity. At Zurich, one end of the lake was frozen over, as only happened in frost of unusual intensity, before the close of November ; and the bitter winds swept down through the mountain gullies with merciless force, often laden with driving sleet and snow, or cutting hail. There was much distress among the poor families in the narrow streets and alleys of the town, many of which had lost their bread-winners in the dreary plague-months ; most of which had not recovered the effects of the almost entire stagnation of the various branches of art and industry during the prevalence of that terrible scourge.

Zwingle set a noble example of the constraining power of the "faith that worketh by love" to produce gentle deeds of kindness and charity. His hand was ever open, so far as his means admitted, to the necessities of the poor of his flock, and his heart ever ready to respond to the cry of need or distress. Among his multifarious labours, among the hindrances of half-hearted friends, and the menaces of enemies daily increasing in numbers and fury, he found time to visit the fatherless and

widows in their affliction, "and to speak the words whereby ye must be saved," by many a lowly hearth, and beside many a humble pallet of weakness and suffering,—labours whose fruits are doubtless stored in heaven, though unrecorded on earth.

It was with a new motive and a deeper joy that Madeline sought the poor homes of suffering and poverty to which she had so often carried her mother's bounty. She knew now who it was that said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME,"—even Him who had made her own cup to overflow with the rich blessing of his pardoning love, and had given her all things richly to enjoy. And it was so sweet to go laden with the earthly gifts he had so abundantly bestowed, and to be able to tell of the surpassing love of which they were but poor tokens and exponents.

In some of the poorest and meanest dwellings, where the plague had raged most fiercely, and where the subsequent distress was greatest, she found memories living in many a heart of the good and holy Sister Elizabeth,—the feeble, aged nun, who had come to them when help and hope were fled, performing for them the most trying and menial offices, and breathing blessed words of heavenly grace and love, which had cheered many a struggling soul in its dark journey through the terrible valley, and which lingered still in the sacred place of many a burdened, drooping heart. Sometimes, they told Madeline, she came amongst them still, whenever she could obtain the prioress's permission to leave the convent in which she dwelt, for the work she so dearly loved. But each time they feared would be the last; her labours during the plague had sorely overtaxed the feeble, aged frame; and it was with difficulty she walked from the convent and mounted the steep, crooked stairs of those poor dwellings.

It was from one poor young widow dying of consumption, by whose husband's death-bed Sister Elizabeth had kept watch, when she lay helpless beside her two dead babes, smitten with

the terrible plague, that Madeline heard most. Not in vain had the nun told the sweet story of the Cross to that poor, lonely sufferer ; she knew herself clasped safe in the everlasting arms, and rested calmly and happily in the shelter of the atoning blood of Christ.

Much Madeline longed to meet one who had held so warm a place in her heart since she knew all she had done for her own dear ones—in her interest since their strange meeting on the way to Einsiedeln. And this longing was fully satisfied in an unlooked-for manner. One day she and Clare were returning from taking food to a poor family in a distant quarter of the town. It was a bitterly cold afternoon ; the air was thick with a coming storm, the streets slippery and rough with trodden, re-frozen snow. At the top of the steep, narrow street leading to the house in which poor Lizette Marthon lay, Madeline paused. “We might just stay to speak a word to poor Lizette, Madeline,” Clare said ; “it is weary lying there alone. And now I remember she said she thought Sister Elizabeth would come to-day. Do let us go.”

“I only feared the storm for thee, darling ; and thou art weary too.” And Madeline still hesitated, looking anxiously at the slight, fragile figure of the child.

“Oh no. And I love to talk to Lizette. It is so wonderful to think how soon she, whom we can help and comfort now, will be with Jesus, wanting nothing for evermore. Come.” And she led the way down the street.

Suddenly she exclaimed, as a tall, dark, bent figure emerged from the doorway of Lizette’s house, “See, Madeline ! there is the dear, good Sister Elizabeth. Oh ! she will fall, the snow has grown so slippery with this sudden frost. I must run to help her ;” and she sprang forward to do so.

But it was too late. The feeble, tottering feet, had not the strength and skill necessary to keep the balance of the frail, aged frame ; there was a false step, a slip—and before Clare or Madeline could reach her, a heavy fall. A woman who was

knitting in a doorway came forward, and, with Madeline's help, carried the light, wasted figure into her cottage, and laid it on a bed. The nun's eyes were closed, her face ghastly white, and at first they feared life was extinct ; but by degrees consciousness returned. A doctor was summoned ; and as one arm was broken, and it was probable that further and still more serious injuries had been received, he forbade any attempt at removing the unfortunate nun, and the poor woman gladly undertook charge of her.

It was soon evident that the few remaining sands of life had been too rudely shaken in the aged frame, and that they were running out with steady pace. Madeline, or Bertha, or Clare was with her almost constantly, as the woman, though well-meaning and kind, and full of gratitude for past kindnesses, was ignorant and unused to nursing.

Vividly the past came back to Madeline, as she sat beside the pallet on which Sister Elizabeth lay. The spot on the mountain road, with the green fern-covered banks overhead and wooded valley at their feet, bathed in the golden radiance of the setting sun,—then the swift, soft falling of the twilight shadows round it,—seemed almost as real to her as the bare walls and unglazed window of the poor room in which she sat. That worn, troubled face, with the dark pathetic eyes, so filled with anguish and unrest, fixed with bitter intentness on the gloomy western sky, had never faded from her memory. But then, with almost startling distinctness, returned the very look it wore, the very words and tones of that deep, earnest voice, which had so thrilled through her girlish soul. It was the same face on which she gazed, scarcely more worn and wasted, though the weight of three more years lay upon it. But it bore now the stamp of a calm, settled peace, and a soft, sweet light filled the faded, sunken eyes. She was very weak, and unable to speak more than a few whispered words, but was quite conscious ; and it was strange to Madeline with what special tenderness she ever greeted her, and with what love and wistful-

ness and sadness her eyes were filled when she lay gazing upon her, and watching every movement. A lay sister from the convent had been sent to attend to her wants, when her condition was known—a meek, humble woman, who seemed to have no thought beyond the mechanical performance of her stated duties, yet who regarded Sister Elizabeth as certainly almost, if not altogether, a saint; and seemed to consider it the greatest misfortune that could possibly have befallen her, to lie thus dying outside the hallowed precincts of the convent walls.

But the dying nun ever answered her lamentations by a happy smile, and bright, upward look. "Time and place make no difference to Him who fills heaven and earth, sister," she said once. "His precious cross and blood will avail for me here as well as there. It is as he has ordered; and it is well, it is right."

Wonderful was the change that had passed over that troubled, despairing spirit; sweet and full of holy, childlike trust were the few words she spoke; bright was the responsive light that beamed on her faded, suffering face, when Madeline or Clare spoke of Him whose voice had risen above the tempest of her soul, saying, "It is I; be not afraid."

Sometimes her mind wandered, rather with the delirium of weakness than of fever; and then she would address Madeline as "Constance," and use words of endearment in an unknown dialect. And a strong, almost uncontrollable desire to know why these things were, took possession of Madeline's heart. But the feeble life seemed ebbing fast away; and though the nun had more than once alluded to that first meeting, and in broken, whispered words, told Madeline how the full forgiveness which she had so long sought in vain had been found at Einsiedeln, not at the Virgin's shrine, nor in the holy waters of the sacred well, not in the acceptance of painful pilgrimage, or vow, or penitence, but in the laying down of all burdens at the foot of the cross,—the naked, simple trust of a broken, despairing

heart in the power of Christ to save even "to the uttermost," in the efficacy of the blood to "cleanse from all sin," in the love of a Saviour God to "in no wise cast out,"—she had never referred to the sad life-story, of which she had given so graphic an outline in those few impassioned words that memorable evening. Perhaps it was the evident association of herself with one of whom the dear, and perhaps sorrowful, memory had remained fresh and tender through long years of separation as real and utter as that of the grave, that made Madeline feel that, in some strange, inexplicable way, she herself was linked with that far-off mysterious past.

Full of these thoughts, she sat one evening by Sister Elizabeth's bed ; the lay sister had gone to rest, that she might be fitted for her post of night-watcher ; and the sufferer slept calmly. Madeline had been surprised that day to find her apparently much better ; her voice was clearer and stronger ; and, as often before, she had dropped asleep, lulled by the young girl's voice singing one of the many sweet hymns that Zwingle had composed and set to music. Sometimes she sang the old familiar Latin hymns, but she found that their effect was less soothing ; and, indeed, they often seemed to produce distressful wandering of mind. Perhaps, she thought, they recalled the old, lost, sorrowful past, while the sweet, familiar gospel-words brought only a present, living Saviour to her mind. But when her eyes opened that day, and Madeline asked her, did she not feel refreshed by so quiet and long a sleep ? she answered, " Yes ; but I shall soon sleep a deeper, sweeter sleep, my child. The end is very near now."

" But thou fearest it not ?"

" No," she said, a sweet, restful smile lighting her pale features ; " the love and grace and pity that has borne with nearly seventy long years of rebellion and folly and sin will not fail me now. And the valley of the shadow of death is less dark than was my life-path for long, long, weary years ; for He is with me in it. Soon I shall be with Him."

"And thou art not afraid of purgatory?" said Madeline, unconsciously uttering what had been the wondering question of her own heart, in the peace and fearlessness with which she and Lizette Marthon,—whose last struggle was over,—and their own Paul had awaited the severance of the last cord which held back their souls from their flight into the unknown future.

"Will He go with me through the dark valley, only to leave me at the end? No; I fear not. Where I go, he will be. 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,' he said. And mine is neither. Neither things present nor things to come can separate from his love. And his blood cleanseth from all sin. Ah! my child, didst thou know with what patient grace he has borne with me, a persecutor, a blasphemer like Paul—yet able to say with him, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'"

There was a long pause, and then the dying nun asked Madeline to sing an old Latin hymn--the one that had seemed to cause her the greatest agitation.

Madeline reminded her of this. But she smiled, and said, "Because that old, once familiar melody, and thy young, fresh voice, awoke such keen, sharp pangs of memory, that I think my weak brain reeled, and I confounded thee with one whom thou art so strangely like, and who sung it long ago. But now I would have that past vividly recalled, though there is scarce need. Life is like a circle—at its close we meet the point at which we started. Thus it is since I have lain here; I have lived again my youth's short fever-dream. Those years seem close and near, while the dreary space that divides them from me appears far away, like the opposite round of the circle. And something bids me tell thee that story. Why, I know not. When the impulse came first, I lacked the strength. And I prayed that if the voice that bade me lift the veil from the past ere my death seal it for ever were from Him, He would give me the bodily power. It has come;—my mind is clear; my voice, thou hearest, clear and strong. But let me hear that

strain once more. Sing it low and sweet, as thou didst before."

With a voice that trembled at first, but grew calm as she proceeded, Madeline did so, while Sister Elizabeth lay with closed eyes and folded hands, and lips that moved as in prayer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LIFE STORY.

"But with this bitter grief comes
A rush of joy untold,
Like sunrise on the mountains,
Flooding their heights with gold.

"For I know Thy blood has cleansed me,
And I know that I'm forgiven;
And all the roughest paths here
Will surely end in heaven."
From "Hymns for the Church on Earth."



LONG after the last tones of Madeline's clear young voice had died away, Sister Elizabeth lay so still and silent that Madeline thought she had again fallen asleep. But at last she said,—“The lips that sung that hymn to me of old, Madeline, have long sung the new song in the heavenly Jerusalem. And the young, fair brow, of which thine reminds me, has long worn the martyr's crown. The last time I heard the full, sweet, solemn tones of that hymn, ere thou sangest it, was in the rocky depths of a Bohemian mountain-forest. My child, thou wilt remember the wild, sad words I spake to thee that day on the mountain-side; how I bade thee obey God's first call?”

“I remember all—each word, each look.”

“And God's call came to thee through the gentle, loving accents of thy Saviour's voice; came to thee as *he* spake it—by his Spirit, and his Word.”

“Yes. He whispered to my soul, ‘Come;’ and I came.”

“Ah ! it was not of such a call as that I spake then, but of a stern summons to lay upon his altar all the idols round which thy heart-strings were twined—all the treasures of love and hope that made thy young life beautiful. Thank God that he has stretched forth his hand to tear down the gloomy veil of Satan’s weaving, that has hidden him so long from weary, straining eyes. And, remember, I tell thee this sad story of sin and sorrow, that thou mayst learn to thank and adore him who has taught thee to know him as he is—not as man, blinded and led astray by Satan and his own pride, has depicted him. But he who bids me tell thee the story will himself teach thee the lessons. And my strength may fail me ere my tale is told.

“The life that is ending here, in this humble garret-chamber, began in a proud Bohemian castle, and cost my mother hers. I grew up, the beloved and only child of my aged father—the heiress of a noble name and rich inheritance ; and with me, her whose fair face I see again in thine—Constance Zierotin, the orphan daughter of a beloved brother-in-arms of my father, who had fallen in the religious wars that desolated the country. Child as she was at her father’s death, his teachings and sayings had made a deep impression on her mind ; and all after-instruction failed to eradicate them. She was to me as an only and beloved sister, and returned my affection with all the tenderness of her gentle, loving nature. My father was a grave, religious man, enthusiastic for the faith of Rome, and deeming no sacrifice too great for the interests of the Church. When Karl Zierotin joined “The Picards,” as the advocates of the gospel were called in mockery, he cast him from his heart and friendship, and only adopted his helpless orphan child that she might not be brought up in the errors of her party. At least, so he persuaded himself.

“And yet one sacrifice had been too great for him. When there was a prospect of my birth, after twenty years of childless wedlock, he vowed to consecrate the expected infant to the Church from its birth if it should prove a daughter ; to dedicate

a large part of his estates to the founding and endowing of a church and monastery if, as was hoped, it should be a boy. I was born, and my mother died. In his grief and desolation, my father's heart failed him. He could not part with the poor babe that had cost him so dear; and he sought to satisfy his conscience by still larger gifts of land and money than he had promised for the birth of a son. But his vow preyed upon his mind; and when I was a bright, thoughtless, happy girl of thirteen, he told me all, and bade me prepare to enter the convent to which I had been dedicated. My tears and passionate entreaties, added to the pleadings of his own heart, again caused him to resist what he fully believed to be the solemn call of God—what I believed to be such too. From that day the shadow, which was to deepen to such utter gloom, began to gather round my path. Never again could I enjoy the pleasures natural to my age, with which my life was outwardly so full, with a free, unclouded heart. A sense of doom rested upon me, a dreadful consciousness that One had claimed me from whose mighty power there was no escape—whose call must be obeyed, or the thunder of his avenging wrath borne. That broken vow weighed on my heart even in my gayest moments. I had a strong, enthusiastic nature, a deep and passionate heart; and I loved the bright world, and the stirring, busy life opening before me; and my whole soul rose in rebellion against the voice that bade me turn my back upon it all, and bury my young, eager life, in the grave-like gloom of the convent.

“By degrees, indeed, the impression became fainter. Sometimes I could forget it altogether for a time. I was an heiress, and my face was fair. My father was much at court; and in the exciting round of ball and tourney, banquet and pageant, flattered and caressed by all, I had almost succeeded in silencing that deep inward voice, when my father was suddenly stretched on a bed of death. Sore was the anguish of that broken vow to him then; and in the self-abandonment of grief, awed by the solemnity of death, and heart-stricken with his remorseful agony,

I knelt, with his cold hands, heavy with the languor of death, resting upon my head, and vowed to fulfil it. His last words were a solemn charge, as I valued my soul's peace and salvation, to beware of trifling with the awful claims that had twice before been disregarded ; and warned me that only thus could I hope to avert the judgments of an offended God, and speed his poor soul's release from purgatory. In the deep sorrow and solemn enthusiasm of that awful night my spirit seemed raised above the allurements of earth, and I no longer shrank from dedicating myself to Heaven. In the blessed, holy calm of the cloister, purer joys and deeper happiness awaited me than could be found in the poor gauds of earth, which, in the bitterness of my first grief, seemed to have lost all their charm. So I was taught by my father's household priest and confessor.

"But I had miscalculated my strength. There was one before whose impassioned pleadings it melted into utter weakness. He, at whose voice and step my heart had learned to leap up as to a music all its own, though as yet no words of love had been breathed between us, heard of my resolution. He came ; he conquered. Like a mighty rushing torrent, the full tide of passionate, earthly love, swept all my vows and resolutions before it. Instead of the bride of heaven, I became a bride of earth.

"For a time I was happy. My Hugo's love shed sunshine round me ; and in his dear presence even the terrible haunting dread of Heaven's avenging rod was forgotten. But in the deep night stillness, in hours of solitude and quiet, what fearful forebodings filled my soul ! I piled rich gifts on shrine and altar ; I wasted myself in secret with discipline and penance. Deep down in my heart I hid the cold sickening fear which oppressed me, and heaped over it all the gathered brightness of my life to hide it from my sight. And all the time God was loving me—bidding me love, and be happy ! But I knew it not—I knew it not.

"The blow I looked for fell—fell suddenly, fell awfully. *He*

let it fall, Madeline ; yet he is love. Remember, child, I believe that now.

“Scarce ten short months had passed. A grand tournament was being held at Königgratz by George Podiebrad, the King. Thither we went. My Hugo was thrice victor in the ring ; and my heart swelled with pride and tenderness as he laid his trophies at my feet—mine, his wife’s ; his first and only love. But while the games proceeded, dark clouds gathered, the distant thunder rolled, and presently a terrific storm broke overhead. Upon my mind there is a vague impression of a sudden, awful gloom ; of pale, terrified faces, and jewelled robes and rich armour, lit up by the purple gleam of the lightning, as flash succeeded flash, peal followed peal. The knightly combatants reined back their affrighted steeds ; and he—my Hugo—spurred his across from the opposite side of the lists, to come to my side.

“There was an awful blinding flash—a gleam of armour amidst a blaze of blue and purple light—a terrific thunder-crash, that shook the very earth. When it was over, a horse and rider motionless in the midst. And soon, upon a warrior’s dead breast, amidst shattered armour and broken sword and blackened plume, another senseless form. Mine !”

Great beads of perspiration stood upon the nun’s brow ; her voice grew hoarse and broken ; and she sank back upon her pillows, covering her face with her trembling hands, as though to shut out the fearful scene passing before memory’s mirror. Madeline’s young face was blanched with horror, but the nun soon looked up again.

“‘He hath done all things well,’” she said ; “doubtless even this. But I have yet much to tell. When I woke to the consciousness of my life, so awfully widowed, my dead babe was lying in its father’s tomb. Gladly would I have laid my weary head beside them there ; but it was not to be. From that bed I rose at last, a weary, broken-hearted woman. To win pardon for the deadly sin of my broken vow, or, if that might not be,

deliverance for that precious unshriven soul, was the one thing left me to live for. And human words may never tell the horror of eternal ruin that fell upon my spirit—the height of gloomy enthusiasm to which my mind was worked up after I entered the convent, to which, at last, I yielded myself and my rich inheritance. I was bidden to forget the past, to dedicate each power left in my poor broken life, to submit each pulsation of my wildly throbbing heart to the voice of God in the Church ; so pardon might be mine, and more—peace, deep and ecstatic, such as earth could never give. I was taught to believe myself marked out by special call and judgment to special sanctity and grace ; and for the first two years my mind was sustained in a strange exalted state. Visions and dreams, doubtless the phantasies of a fevered brain, sustained my sinking spirit, while I yet believed the blessedness of which I was told could be mine.

“My gentle Constance had become the bride of Theodore Rostha, a leader among the hated heretic Picards, soon after I entered the convent. She had loved him faithfully and long ; and the gospel truths he taught her, reviving the childish faith to which she had ever clung, had drawn upon her much persecution. In my sorrow and desolation she refused to leave me, even for his sake, in spite of the bitterness with which I repelled her loving attempts at consolation, blent as they were with heretic teachings. Soon after their marriage, a violent persecution broke out, and compelled the Picards to take refuge in the woods and caves of the mountains.

“I had been in the convent about two years, when I was ordered to take a weekly pittance of food to a recluse, who lived in a hut in a deep forest-glen, at some distance from the convent. The path led through a wild, dense forest, past rocky dells and caves in the mountain-side, of which many a wild legend was told. It was utterly lonely. Some poor peasant or woodcutter alone traversed it ; and no penance was more feared than this. And about that time rumours had been

brought to the convent that some of the "Jamnici," or Pitmen, as the hunted Picards were called, were concealed in the depths of this mountain-forest; and special graces and favours were offered to any who might discover and reveal their hiding-place.

"It was a gloomy winter evening when I set forth alone on this dreaded errand. It was twilight under the dark pine boughs, and strange, unearthly sounds proceeded from the creaking branches; my overwrought nerves thrilled with terror at each step; and when at last, my mission accomplished, I turned to retrace my way, I hurried on with wildly-beating heart, not knowing whither I went. When, at last, I stopped to take breath, I found I had utterly lost my way, and had come to a spot where the ground suddenly sloped down into a kind of wooded ravine. It grew dark while I vainly endeavoured to retrace my steps. I could find no path; a labyrinth of trees surrounded me on every side. Utterly exhausted, I sank in despair on the ground, shuddering with terror at the strange sounds which the wintry wind awoke in the deep recesses of the wood.

"Suddenly from the depth of the ravine rose a sweet, familiar strain, a hymn sung by many voices, sounding full and solemn in the quiet night. It was Constance's favourite hymn, the one thou sangest just now, my daughter. Half cheered, half terrified, at last I rose, and, guided by the sounds, crept cautiously down the steep sides of the ravine.

"And there I saw a strange sight. Round a fire that blazed in the shelter of a great rock was assembled a group of some twenty persons,—some men of noble mien, in rich but tattered garments, some in peasant guise. In the midst, with the red light of the fire full upon his face, stood one I knew well—Theodore Rostha. In his hand he held a book, from which he was reading. Full, and clear, and sweet his deep, familiar tones rang out as he read, and afterwards spoke, words few indeed, but apparently full of power, judging from the effect they

had upon the audience. Ah, had I listened to them! Perhaps I shall learn I was brought there to give me one more chance of escaping the dreary path that lay before me, by listening to God's words, and learning what he was. But in the blind folly of my superstitious zeal I placed my fingers in my ears, that I might not catch them.

"When he ceased speaking, a movement in the group showed me a woman, with a babe upon her breast, seated in the full light of the fire. The upturned face was pale, but full of trust and peace, as Theodore bent over her and the child. It was my Constance. Unconsciously yielding to the first impulse of natural affection, I stepped forward towards her, and was seen. Once more my heart gained the mastery; I wept over Constance and her child, and listened with shuddering sympathy to the sad tale of hardship and wrong so meekly told, of danger and death so nobly braved. One short hour I, a nun of the far-famed convent of Marienbad, sat by the Picard watchfire in the wild ravine of the Böhmer mountains, and gave the reins to nature's love and grief once more. Then I bade farewell to Constance and her lovely bright-eyed babe; and Theodore guided me through the tangled forest paths to the convent gates.

" 'Our lives are in thy hands, Irma,' he said; 'the Lord be witness between us and thee.'

" 'I am no traitress, Theodore Rostha,' I answered proudly.

" 'Thou art the bond-slave of Rome, Irma,' he answered, sadly and solemnly. 'God bless thee, and bring thee out of her darkness into his light.'

"And as he turned and strode away into the dark forest once more, I felt that he was right. I *was* a bond-slave—my will, my conscience, my thoughts were in the keeping of another. How could I conceal what the confessional would too surely betray?

"I think, could I then have called Theodore back, I might have warned him. But I betrayed them,—wilfully, voluntarily!

To my perverted understanding and morbid conscience such a course was presented as a glorious triumph of the spiritual over the natural, as an atonement for the guilt of my broken vows and sinful yielding to carnal affections. It was not without a fearful struggle ; but I thought such anguish as it cost me to do this deed must surely be accepted. I betrayed them, and never knew peace again till Christ gave me *his*.

“A week had passed, and again I was sent through the forest to the hermit’s dwelling. The snow lay thick on the dark pines and on the open glades that here and there broke the thick wood ; and the sun was setting with crimson splendour in the cloudless sky of a clear, frosty December afternoon. A terrible oppression of dread rested upon me. I would have given worlds to have known that Theodore and Constance had escaped the snare my treacherous words had laid for them. At every sound I started, like the guilty thing I was ; and yet I deemed my remorseful anguish for what I had done my deadliest sin. Suddenly I heard a sound that froze my blood with terror—the low wailing cry of a babe. It pierced my heart with a nameless pang, and some uncontrollable impulse made me turn from the narrow path along which I was hurrying in the direction whence it came.

“Madeline, listen : it was *this* scene thy face recalled to me when I looked upon it first in the rich sunset light.

“I reached an open glade at the edge of one of the many deep ravines with which that mountain-forest was broken. And there, beneath a giant pine, I saw Theodore and Constance and their babe. Her head was pillowed upon his breast ; her fair, sweet face, was pallid with mortal anguish, for the babe’s little garments were steeped with its mother’s life-blood. This was my work. Full well I knew it.

“As if spell-bound, I stood rooted to the spot within the deep shadow of the wood where the fearful sight first met me. I heard not the low whispered words that were breathed from those blanched, quivering lips, nor those that answered them.

But I saw the swift fading of the light from the meek, upturned eyes, that sought to the last the gaze of him whose face bent low over hers. I saw the failing arms release their hold from the babe that slept quietly in their clasp; I saw a motionless form laid gently down on a cold snow-pillow, and then I saw—I saw Theodore's face. My God—that face! How it haunted me for years of bitter remorse more than even the calm white countenance of my murdered Constance. With his unconscious babe in his arms, he raised it to the glowing western sky, as though to appeal to Him whose glory was faintly mirrored there for vengeance for the innocent dead.

“A moment he stood thus, rigid, motionless, his young, noble face, blanched to marble with mighty anguish. The next he sank upon his knees on the snow stained with *her* life-blood, and from his wrung heart went up a cry to Heaven—not for vengeance, not for judgment—for mercy, for pardon for her murderers, for *me*. Yes; he knew what I had done, yet he prayed for *me*. ‘Father, forgive her, comfort her, lead her into thy light,’ he prayed. I could bear no more. I turned and fled, I left him with his anguish and his dead.”

Again the nun sank back, overcome with agitation and exhaustion. Madeline, pale and trembling with emotion, bathed her brow, and gave her a cordial which revived her.

“I may briefly tell thee the rest. Thou wilt guess that, guided by my description, the hunted heretic-band had been surprised at the fire they dared only light when night came on; some had escaped into the woods, but most had fallen, and some were prisoners reserved for a harder fate. Theodore had succeeded in carrying off Constance, who had been wounded as she clung to his breast.

“I think my mind must have failed me, for the years that followed are a blank. Then consciousness returned, and with it horror and despair. But slowly, slowly the maddening anguish died down to a dull aching, a gnawing pain. I was bidden to forget the past, or remember it only as an incentive to

acts of mortification and penance. And the deed which had brought blood-guiltiness upon my soul I was told to regard as a blessed triumph of spiritual grace over carnal weakness; the bitter grief and remorse I felt for it was censured as deadly sin. For more than forty long years this conflict went on. From convent to convent I passed on my long pilgrimages from shrine to shrine. If thou rememberest what I told thee of my heart's struggles that evening long ago, thou wilt comprehend it now. I sought to conquer the anguish, the repentance that was God's voice in my soul. How I failed, thou knowest. At sight and sound of thy young face and voice, so wondrously like hers, the rushing tide of human love and agony swept over the frail barriers it had taken years to raise, and I yielded to despair.

"Then *He* found me,—He that had loved me all those weary years. If thou wouldst ask aught, my daughter, ask it quickly, while yet I can answer thee." For Madeline's lips had parted as if to speak.

"I would but ask thee of him, the bereaved husband. Didst thou ever learn his fate, and that of his poor motherless babe?"

"Never. Doubtless he perished too. There was little chance of escape from the fierce persecution that raged at that time. I look to see those faces in the light of another sun, where the memory of earthly pain and wrong will come into mind no more. It is the faith for which they died in which I die too;—the faith of the Bohemians, of Huss,—the faith of the apostles, of the saints and martyrs of old,—the faith of the gospel revealed in God's blessed Word. It has once more broken, like the light of a new day, over a darkened world. My daughter, the dying sometimes see far. I see things coming,—conflict, terror, strife. The battle is only begun. But it is the Lord's, and he will prevail."

For a time there was silence; but at last Sister Elizabeth spoke again. "God knows," she said, "wherefore I have been impelled to burden thy young spirit with this sad story of a wasted, erring life, so soon to end in a nameless grave. But I

would bid thee remember ever that God is love; that he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust; that like as a father pitieth his children, so he pitieth those that fear him,—fear him, not as an awful Being, demanding the renunciation of every tender human tie and affection, but as a pitiful, loving, all-wise Father, delighting in the happiness of his children. Ah! had I known all the earthly brightness of my young life, my father's tenderness, and my Hugo's love, to be the gifts of his goodness, all might have been changed. My child, give him—the dear Lord Christ, who died for thee, who loves thee with a love that passeth knowledge—the first place in thine heart, and then fear not to love and to be loved. For God is love, and love is of God. The gospel is made, not to hide away in dark, gloomy convent cells, but to fit into the simple details of homely every-day life, in castle and in cottage, in joy as well as in sorrow. And in the lowly ministries of family-life there are opportunities for following in his blessed steps, such as the cloister can never give. For one is God's holy, happy ordinance,—the other man's gloomy institution for binding down, to one cold, formal rule, hearts and souls Christ's blood has bought and made free. When thou seest one tempted to think otherwise, think of the life of Irma Zorenski. At the end of long, wasted years, she has learned at last that it is not out of the world, but in it, in the homes and hearts he has made for us, that God would have us live and serve him. Ah, my daughter! it is better to learn that in spring than in autumn's last fading days. But all is over now, all but rest and peace. Peace—peace,” she murmured; “peace here, joy there, with Him.”

From that time Sister Elizabeth sank rapidly. All her powers of mind and body seemed to have been concentrated in that one great effort, and to fail finally with its completion. She lay calm and quiet, her faded face ever lighting up at every mention of Him whose presence in the dark valley she so sweetly realized; and her few whispered words were of Him, his love, his grace, his pity. Two days afterwards she died; and her last

words, spoken distinctly, and with emphasis after she had lain apparently unconscious for hours, as she opened her dark weary eyes for the last time to this world's light, and fixed them on Madeline's face, were, "Yes ; it is full forgiveness—full—full—full."

None at the convent knew whence she came and who she had been. In her wanderings all traces of her origin had been lost. And it was little thought that the lowly grave of the humble and gentle Sister Elizabeth held one whose kindred dust lay among the sepulchres of kings, in whose veins had flowed the noblest blood of Bohemia, whose fair inheritance had been so costly a prize to the convent that had received the vows of the young and beautiful Irma Zorenski.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WAITING.

"Who waiteth on the Master
The Master's will shall know.
He hath taught me one sweet lesson,
I have learned it not too late,—
There is service for the feeblest,
Who only stand and wait."—ANNA SHIPTON.



THROUGHOUT that autumn and winter the freshly trimmed lamp of Truth shone with ever brightening ray in Zurich. The priests and monks inveighed with much bitterness against the innovations of Zwingle, and were rendered furious by a decree of the Great Council, which forbade any preaching that did not rest entirely upon the truth as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. From that time the reformer's life was a realization of David's experience: "There is but a step between me and death." Plots were formed against his life, and the Council thought it necessary to place a guard at the door of the house in which he and his curate Stäheli lived. But amidst threats, and the haunting dread of the assassin's steel, Zwingle held on his way unmoved; his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord.

In other parts open persecution broke out. At Lucerne, Oswald Myconius was, to use his own words, "driven by his adversaries like a ship by the raging billows." In Schaffhausen, an aged man, named Galster, not being able to keep to himself the joy the gospel had communicated to his own soul, sought

to impart it to others, especially to his own family. He was destined to experience the bitter truth of the Lord's words: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." He fled to a neighbouring forest, where he subsisted on roots and berries for some days. On the last night of the year, by order of the Council, the poor old man was hunted down *by dogs* in the dark forest. Dragged before the magistrates, he refused to deny his Lord, and sealed his fate with his blood. He was beheaded.

Quietly, and unbroken by any marked event, the household life of the Reinhardt family flowed on. The father's health did not recover the shock given to it by the plague, and his increasing infirmities rendered it necessary that Max and Friedel should at once take part in the business. At this Max chafed and fretted sorely. "It was no time," he said, "for a man to spend his life in buying and selling silks, when a nation's rights and liberties were being wrenched from the hand of an oppressing power."

Alas! to Max, as to many, in those days of intellectual awakening, the gospel had come in word, not in power. He had not learned that in the simple, faithful performance of the everyday duties of life, God's glory may be advanced, and the power of gospel truth evidenced, as really, if not as conspicuously, as in the forefront of the battle against error.

Paul's life still flowed on through the same narrow, pent-up channel. A measure of strength had returned, but brief gleams of improvement were succeeded by relapses into the old suffering state, and the power and the opportunity seemed alike wanting for the work he longed to do. At times his fainting spirit yearned wearily for the golden shore on which it had so nearly landed, for the rest that had been so nearly won. And there were times when the tired arm dropped the shield of faith, and the fiery darts of the cruel tempter lodged in the quivering breast, and thick gloom enveloped the troubled, overwhelmed soul. Then it was no memory of dream or vision to which Paul clung, but to the naked word of Him who cannot lie. "Heaven

and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away ; " " I will never fail thee nor forsake thee. " " These are His words,—to them I anchor all my trust, " he would say at such times ; and by degrees the clouds would break, and the sun again shine forth upon him.

Bertha was still the same grave, sad woman, to all but Paul and Madeline. To them a slight change was visible ; there was more of wistfulness than bitterness in her look, when she listened to the words of life ; and sometimes her work would drop upon her knee, and her busy hands be still, while she drank in each word with evident eagerness. But even to them she preserved unbroken silence as to her inner life.

The strange, sad story of Sister Elizabeth's sorely-stricken life, haunted Madeline through all those winter months ; and her mind dwelt especially upon the mournful fate of the gentle Constance Rostha, and the still sadder lot of the young husband and father. Often and often her fancy conjured up the scene in the wintry forest, with the crimson sunset lighting up the calm face of the dead, and the anguished countenance of the living as he knelt with his motherless babe in his arms. His after-fate, who could tell it ? A restless, unaccountable yearning to know it, took possession of Madeline's heart. Once a thought flashed across her mind so wild, so improbable, that but for the sadness of the associations she would have smiled ; she put it from her at once. But it haunted her.

One day Friedel brought to their house a young Bohemian student, who, after spending some time at the university of Wittemberg, had come, attracted by the growing fame of Zwingle, to hear and converse with him before he returned to his own country. From him Madeline received the loan of a manuscript in which the story of the hunted Picards was touchingly and simply told, by one who had shared their faith and their trials—the student's grandfather. She had read before of the long struggle that had been carried on in Bohemia against spiritual tyranny ; of the blood that had flowed, from the day

when that of the royal martyr Wenzel, shed by a brother's hand, dyed the altar-steps of the palace chapel, to that of the betrayed, heroic Huss ; how the cruel rage of the heathen queen, Drachomira, had not been more deadly or bitter in its effects than that of the rulers of the Roman Church against those who boldly took Christ and his Word as their only salvation and guide ; for these things had been much discussed of late since the bold recognition of brotherhood with the despised followers of Huss, made by Luther after the Leipzig discussion. But in this simple story of a happy Christian household driven from their home, and forced to take refuge in woods and caves, and then hunted like the animals whose wild retreats they shared, she saw a picture of the life that had preceded the martyr-death of Constance Rostha. And at last she came upon the name of Rostha, as that of a baron who had been one of the most heroic and devoted leaders of the brethren at that terrible time—a kinsman, doubtless, of the bereaved Theodore, for, from various circumstances recorded, he was evidently not the same person.

But Bernhard Taubnitz gave the finishing-touch to Sister Elizabeth's tragic story. He remembered having often heard his grandfather speak of a young cousin of the great Baron Rostha, who had been distinguished for his piety and zeal, and had been obliged to flee with his fair young bride into the dark forest ravines of the Böhmer mountains, where both perished, with their infant child, in one of the many ruthless massacres that were perpetrated, when the gathering-places of the poor hunted wanderers were discovered.

Meanwhile, how was it with Muriel von Ohrendorf ? During the winter months it was scarcely strange that no letters reached Zurich from Vaudemont, but Madeline's heart yearned anxiously for tidings of her friend. Could she have known how the clouds of superstitious gloom were gathering over Muriel's sight once more, veiling from her eyes the beautiful light of the gospel, and weighing down her trembling soul with bitter bondage,

how much deeper and sadder would those yearnings have been.

At first, all had gone well with her. The memories of the sweet words she had heard at Baden and at Basle lingered in her heart, and she dared to be happy. And she scarce knew how or why, but love seemed sweeter and life more precious than ever before. She had brought back with her new thoughts, new feelings, it might be new hopes ; all vague and undefined, yet making her live in a happy waking dream. But presently she began to feel the void in her life left by Madeline's absence. Lady Ermengarde was happy in her ordinary simple pursuits ; her placid nature had been unstirred by all she had heard and seen, except that sometimes she regretted plaintively that everything seemed disturbed ; that the even tenor of the world's way was changed for excitement and agitation ; that people were all beginning to speak and act as though it were necessary for each man and woman to think for himself and herself in spiritual matters, instead of quietly leaving them to their appointed guardians.

By degrees Agnes regained her old influence over Muriel. She began slowly and cautiously, not by controverting her opinions, but by making them subservient to her own. If Muriel spoke of God as a Father, Agnes dwelt upon a father's authority and claim to his children's obedience ; if Muriel spoke of Christ's love, Agnes dilated on the return he expected for such love ; if Muriel spoke of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, leading and feeding his weak, helpless sheep, Agnes pointed out how the sheep must go the same road as the Shepherd ; if Muriel spoke of the freeness of God's grace, Agnes was ready with solemn warnings against trifling with such a gift. All truth, but, as she brought it to bear upon Muriel's morbid conscience and fervid imagination, truth distorted, perverted.

But when Muriel spoke of the power of Christ's blood to cleanse, of his sacrifice to save, Agnes was prepared with arguments and reasons against the presumptuous folly of believing heaven was to be won thus easily. Were the teachings and

examples of the holy fathers of the Church, of the blessed saints and learned doctors, who had walked in the old narrow path leading to God and glory for fifteen hundred years, to be set aside and disregarded, because men, panting for carnal liberty and fame, professed to have discovered that they were all mistaken? Was the voice of an ignorant monk, and those of the restless, deluded men that followed him, to be listened to rather than theirs? Had God withheld for ages the knowledge of himself and his truth from those appointed by his earthly representative,—the Holy Father of the Universal Church,—only to reveal it to a simple monk?

To such words as these, the tidings that the Pope had issued a bull excommunicating Luther, and that his heretical books had been condemned to the flames, gave added weight. And when a Dominican friar brought to Vaudemont the startling news that on the 10th December Luther had gone out to the eastern gate of Wittenberg, and there, before the Holy Cross, publicly burned the Pope's bull, the Decretals, the Canon Law, and the Clementines, thereby severing the last link that bound him to the Papal See, Muriel felt like one whose eyes were suddenly opened on the brink of an abyss. Henceforth the darkness deepened around her. She could not wholly let go the faith she had learned from Madeline. She did not believe God was other than she had been taught, but her eyes were turned from him to herself. Thus, her very knowledge of his goodness and grace was made a torture to her, for she grew to look upon them only as bonds held against her, claiming from her the renunciation of everything which the false teaching of Rome had taught her to consider as incompatible with devotion to Him who had sacrificed all—even himself—for her. Raymond was still absent, and the quiet, monotonous life, she led in the lonely old castle was well calculated to develop morbid depression; and Agnes watched with gloomy enthusiasm the waking up of the old conflict in the poor girl's heart.

One afternoon late in April, the long-expected letter from

Vaudemont was at last placed in Madeline's hands. As she read it, the colour left her face, and the burning tears rushed to her eyes. For some time she sat lost in thought, then took up the letters and carried them to Paul's room. He read them through quietly, and then looked up into Madeline's face, saying, "Well, Madeline?"

"O Paul! what must I do? I *cannot* leave thee; and yet—"

"Yet thy Master may call thee elsewhere, sweet sister. If it be so, thou art ready to obey his voice?"

"Yes; but—"

"But thou must leave thy dear home once more, and the precious gospel light, and the poor crippled brother whom thou lovest so well, and to whom thy presence is as sunshine. Is not that what thou wouldst say?" Madeline could only answer by her tears.

Muriel's letter was almost incoherent in its distressful strain. Some danger threatened her, from which she seemed to think her friend's presence might save her. "I am perplexed, bewildered, confused. The sore strife between heart and conscience is wearing out my very life. O Madeline, my friend, my sister, come to me! If thou ever lovedst me, come and save me from myself—from—I know not what! Thou writest me of the light that fills thy happy home. Oh, come and bring light into the utter darkness that surrounds me! Come, Madeline, and soon, ere it be *too late*, to thine unhappy Muriel." So the letter ended, and Lady Ermengarde's few lines contained the same plea, more gently and calmly urged.

"Madeline," Paul continued gently, "we have spoken much lately of the sweetness of doing aught for Christ, and our hearts have been stirred as we have read and talked of those who have given up all, and counted not their lives dear unto themselves for his sake, and *at his call*. That call may not come to us, or it may; God knows. But in looking for the great things, let us not forget the small. Let it be said of thee, 'She hath done what she could.'"



Luther publicly burned the Pope's bull.

“Thou thinkest I should go, Paul?”

“I do, my sister. I shall miss thee, dearest; but for the sake of a poor, dark, troubled soul, such as mine was once, pleading for a drop from our brimming cup, I am willing to do so. And for His dear sake who has shed such abundant light and peace on mine, I am glad. For, Madeline, I have been thinking lately that my work must be to suffer, not to act; to *be*, and not to do what the Lord would have me. And I am sure the love that will not overlook the cup of cold water given for his sake and in his name, will not leave unnoticed and uncared-for the smallest sacrifice, the least service, in me or in thee.”

But it cost Madeline a struggle to leave her home again, dearly as she loved Muriel. A hundred miles' journey was not one to be taken for a few days at that time, and she had been so happy that autumn and winter. One face had been missing when she had returned from her former visit, and she had been needed so sorely in her absence. But more and more her heart yearned over her friend, and the passionate pleading of her letter was not to be disregarded. The story of Sister Elizabeth recurred to her mind; what if Muriel's life should repeat it? Madeline had learned much since she had parted from Muriel; the perplexities she had then shared were no longer such to her. Then she had been a babe, blindly trusting all to a Father's love and wisdom; now she had learned to know something of that Father's mind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONFLICT.

"My heart revolts within me, and two voices
Make themselves audible within my bosom."—WALLENSTEIN.



THE end of the month found Madeline once more on her way to Vaudemont. Her good old uncle, Andrew Reinhardt, shook his head when she told him of her fears for Muriel. "Poor child," he said,—“poor foolish child! She thinks the best way to please God is to make herself as unlike him as possible; for he is love, and she is seeking to crush all human feeling out of her heart, in which he himself has planted it. Her mind has been poisoned by dwelling on the lives and words of *man's* saints instead of God's. I saw that when she was here. Tell her, Madeline, what I am sure thou knowest, that it is not the world, but the evil that is in it, that God would have us forsake. As lights in a dark place, as salt in a corrupt mass, he bids us be *to* it, therefore *in* it, even while not *of* it; and it is not human love and feeling, but human passion and sin, that are contrary to his will.”

It was just such an evening as the one on which she had arrived there two years before, when Madeline came in sight of the old gray turrets of Vaudemont. Max had accompanied her, and the journey had been performed in a carriage hired at Basle, until, a few miles from Vaudemont, one of the axle-trees had broken, and, in preference to waiting for it to be repaired,

they left it and the baggage in charge of the driver, and proceeded on foot by a path well known to Madeline, passing through verdant meadow and forest paths to the very base of the slopes leading to the castle. The afternoon sunshine streamed through the delicate green of the half-opened leaves, and fell in chequered tracery of light and shade on the mossy turf, gemmed with thousands of fair wood-flowers; the air was full of sweet scents and sounds; and as Madeline looked round, her heart rejoiced in the tokens of a Father's love and kindness.

"O Max," she exclaimed after a long silence, during which she had been keenly enjoying the beauty round her, "how can people think God does not wish us to be happy, that it displeases him when our hearts rejoice in all his beautiful gifts?"

"People think what they are taught, Lina. It is not *happy* people that fill the priests' coffers. But there is a good time coming. The yoke of the foreign tyrant has been thrown off from the hearths and homes of Switzerland, that of spiritual tyranny will ere long be broken too. Hearts and consciences also must be unfettered in this our own free mountain-land. What the preachers cannot do, Swiss broadswords will."

"O Max, God will fight his own battles, not with the sword, but with the gospel of his grace."

"That is Friedel's creed, but I tell thee it will take more than preaching. And why should we wait for the slow work of years? Why should such things as were done in that Schaffhausen forest be endured in silence? See, Lina, let us sit a while on that tree. We shall not have a talk together again for long." And he led the way through some bushes to where lay a fallen pine, at some little distance from the bridle-path along which they had been walking.

As they sat there in earnest conversation the muffled sound of horse-hoofs falling on the turf met their ears, then that of voices, and a lady mounted on a white palfrey came in sight, with a young knight walking beside it with the bridle of his

own steed over his arm. Madeline had already recognized the soft silvery tones of the lady's voice, and, laying her hand on Max's arm to keep him still, watched eagerly for the first sight of Muriel's face. She had been picturing it with the wistful, pensive expression she remembered so well ; she saw it quivering with a strange, tremulous brightness,—the beautiful dark eyes veiled by the long lashes, which almost swept the cheek, upon which a lovely colour glowed, the sweet lips wearing a happy, unconscious smile. She wore a dark blue riding-dress richly embroidered with gold, and a little blue velvet cap, round which drooped a long white plume. A hawk sat upon one slender wrist, busily employed in endeavouring to tear to pieces some flowers she held in her ungloved fingers. Never had Madeline seen her look so lovely.

Her companion was a slight, graceful youth, whose rich dress and plumed cap bespoke noble birth. In one hand he held a lady's jewelled glove, the other rested caressingly on the arched neck of Muriel's palfrey. His face was turned towards them as they passed. Its paleness, and the refined, delicate beauty of the chiselled features, might have given the impression of weakness and effeminacy, had it not been for the fire that glowed in the dark gray eyes that were raised to Muriel's face, and the intellectual power that sat throned on the high massive brow, which was left uncovered by the small cap worn, after the fashion of the times, at the side of the head. He was speaking rapidly and earnestly, and just as they passed Muriel raised her sweet dark eyes to his for a moment. The long lashes drooped over them again almost instantaneously ; but Madeline saw the soft light that was shining in them, and the answering flash that met their shy, trustful gaze.

Another minute and they had passed on.

How often in after-years Madeline recalled that scene. The white palfrey, with its scarlet and silver housings ; the knight's black jennet, with its proudly arched neck and disdainful tread ; the two youthful figures, so well matched in grace and beauty,

passing onward through the green vista of the woodland path ; the blue heavens looking down lovingly through the verdant archway of young leaves and hoary boughs ; the laughing sunbeams flickering round them, tenderly kissing their young brows, and darting down as if in merry play on the bright-hued, sweet-scented blossoms which strewed the green turf on which they trod ; and the sounds of their own low, happy voices, the busy hum of insects, the joyous carollings of rejoicing birds, the music to which they moved ;—all brightness above, around, within ; heaven's sunshine above, earth's beauty around. Was this to be the token of the future that awaited them ? Surprise, hope, joy, by turn filled Madeline's heart, all giving place to the fervent, yearning wish that was unconscious prayer, that so it might be,—that to Muriel's life might come the blessing of holy human love, illumined and hallowed with Heaven's sunshine.

Lost in these thoughts, she stood gazing long after they were lost to sight by a bend in the path, until her eyes were blinded with thankful tears, and she awoke to the consciousness that Max was somewhat impatiently calling upon her to answer his questions. Beyond telling him that the lovely lady was indeed her beloved Muriel, she could not do so ; the young noble was an utter stranger to her.

It must be confessed that Max had a very abstracted companion the rest of the way. He rallied Madeline upon the romantic castles in the air he knew she was building for her friend, and prophesied she would discover the knight of the forest to be no other than the young knight of the castle, Raymond von Ohrendorf. But Madeline's womanly instinct told her it was not so ; and at the foot of the slope they met the young nobleman riding away, attended by a servant whose badge was not that of the Ohrendorfs.

Their approach to the castle had not been noticed, and after receiving the affectionate greeting of the Lady Ermengarde, Madeline proceeded to surprise Muriel. She found her in her

room, still in her riding-dress, sitting with her face hidden in her hands. She looked up as Madeline entered, and showed a face in which the happy glow had given place to deadly pallor. Her appearance struck cold to Madeline's heart; but in another instant Muriel was clinging to her, her sweet eyes shining through happy tears, her cheeks glowing and her lips quivering as she lavished every tender word of endearment upon her; and throughout the whole evening she was so bright and animated, that to an ordinary observer it would have seemed impossible that any secret care could have been gnawing at her heart. Not so to Madeline; to her the gaiety was feverish; there was unrest in the bright eyes, from which the light sometimes died out with startling suddenness, leaving the lovely face pale and blank, like a transparency from which the lamp within has suddenly been removed. And when, after the first greetings had passed, Madeline told Muriel how she had unintentionally acted as a spy upon her, and playfully rallied her upon her forest-knight, the extreme and painful agitation she had displayed alarmed and distressed her. She turned a quick, startled glance upon her, a sudden, vivid glow suffused her cheeks and brow—her neck even; then it faded suddenly, utterly, a shiver passed over her frame, the light died out of her eyes, and her white lips were set closely as with physical pain. Just then a servant entered the room, and Muriel quickly resumed her ordinary manner.

Long past midnight Madeline lay awake, listening to the melancholy roar of the torrent in the gorge, which seemed to her saddened fancy to be sounding a mournful requiem over the buried hopes and perished affections of so many human lives. The first Lady Ermengarde's, her mother's, Bertha's, that of the lonely gray-haired stranger who slept in his unknown grave in the village church-yard, Sister Elizabeth's—and with the thought of the latter her fears for Muriel took definite form and shape. But she thought of the Father's heart above yearning over the poor, foolish, wandering children of earth, and was

comforted. He would save her friend ; one day she would wake from the nightmare dream of superstitious fear, and read the love in the eyes that had watched over her through it all.

It so happened that the week that followed Madeline's arrival was one of great festivity. It was Easter-time, and, according to her custom, the Lady of Vallangin, Guillemette de Vergy, had her grim old castle filled with young and gay guests ; dances and banquets, tiltings and maskings, merriment and music succeeded the gloom and austerities of the Lenten season, —and these were fully reciprocated at Vaudemont. Thus it was that Madeline had opportunity to observe Muriel with the keen discriminating gaze of affection, while as yet no confidence had passed between them. What she saw pained and troubled her. Muriel seemed to avoid being alone with her, and to throw herself with feverish gaiety into the amusements for which she had once cared so little, at some times ; while at others she was pale, cold, and abstracted. The young knight, Guy de Montmédi, was ever at her side when possible ; but Madeline was puzzled to see Muriel at times cold and distant towards him, at others timidly yet trustfully reciprocating his interest. This variability was not from coquetry, she was sure ; and she longed for the time when the festivities should be over and she and Muriel together, as of old.

It came ; but then Madeline felt with pain that Muriel was changed to her. She made no allusions to the subject of her letter, was constrained in manner when they were alone, and seemed to shrink from any reference to her own inner life, past or present, and she appeared especially to shun all reference to religious subjects. At times, indeed, she would almost frighten Madeline with outbreaks of passionate tenderness ; but they were always transient, and succeeded by greater reserve.

But from Lady Ermengarde Madeline learned that it was as a suitor accepted for Muriel by herself and the Baron, that Guy de Montmédi visited at the castle. And Madeline could but feel he was in every way worthy of her friend. To the charm

of personal beauty and knightly courtesy he added the fascination of brilliant talents and a highly cultivated mind, and had warmly embraced the cause of gospel truth.

Disappointed and chilled by Muriel's coldness and reserve, Madeline had begun to question whether she had not torn herself to no purpose from the dear home in which she would be so much missed, when the ice was suddenly and unexpectedly broken. She had accompanied the Baron, Muriel, and Guy de Montmédi on a hawking expedition, in which the Baron had perhaps designedly chosen to take Madeline by a different road from the one by which the young Count had led Muriel ; and when, some time afterwards, they met again, Muriel's face shone with the soft, sweet look, which had illumined it when Madeline first saw it in the forest-path on the evening of her arrival. But, as usual, when Guy was gone it changed.

That evening Madeline saw that often half-spoken words remained forgotten on Muriel's lips ; and though, at her mother's request, she took her lute and began to sing, her rich, clear voice, had lost its power, and after a few vain efforts she laid the instrument aside. Yet when Madeline's tearful, pleading eyes, bespoke the yearning love and sympathy which her natural delicacy made her shrink from putting into words, Muriel averted her troubled eyes, and, hastily pressing her quivering lips to her cheek, bade her good-night.

Madeline drew the tapestry hangings that separated their rooms closely together, and wept as she remembered the happy hours they had spent together before this strange, undefinable barrier, had risen between her and the dear friend over whom her heart yearned with inexpressible sympathy and tenderness. But there was one way in which she could help—only one ; so she knelt and besought the Great High Priest, the One touched with the feeling of our infirmities, to help and comfort Muriel.

Almost unconsciously, even before her return to Zurich, Madeline had learned to confide only in the one Mediator. It could scarcely fail to be so when the Jesus, at once divine

and human, of the Scriptures was apprehended by the soul. Before the infinite tenderness, and grace, and comprehension, and patience of such a Mediator, the claims of all other intercessors grew shadowy and died away. With an imaginary need perished an imaginary worth. Jesus was enough.

The other side the tapestry knelt a suppliant too. Muriel had unbound her rich hair and flung aside her jewelled zone and bracelets, but the white, agonized face that gleamed in the pale ray of the small silver lamp that burned before the little altar which stood in a recess in her room, was upturned to the pictured face of a Madonna that hung above it, and her hands convulsively grasped a crucifix. Alas! poor Muriel! Well mightst thou be "tempest-tossed and not comforted," for thou wert resolutely turning thy face from the light, and silencing the low, sweet whisper of redeeming love, with the delusions and sophistries of Rome.

Madeline had risen from her knees soothed and refreshed, as they who know and believe God has "laid help upon One that is mighty" cannot fail to be when they have cast their burdens upon him and *left them with him*. She was just falling asleep, when the tapestry was softly drawn aside and Muriel glided in. The full moon shone in through the high, narrow window, and a broad beam of silvery light fell directly upon her as she entered, bringing out the slight, graceful form, with its rich dress, and gleaming hair, and marble-like face, rising against the dim outlines of the grotesque figures on the tapestry, in strong contrast with the thick gloom which enveloped the rest of the room.

"Dost thou sleep, Madeline?" she said, in a low tone of such utter anguish that Madeline started up in terror, which increased as she met Muriel's eyes and felt the icy coldness of the hands she clasped in her own.

"What is it, dearest; art thou ill?"

"No, no! Oh, would that I were,—would that I were dead, and this cruel conflict ended! O Madeline, help me—pity me!"

"Pity thee!—O Muriel, didst thou know how my heart yearns over thee! But how can I help thee, when I know not wherefore thou art thus? What is the grief that is torturing thee?"

"*Dost* thou not know, Madeline?"

Even in the pale moonlight Madeline could see the vivid crimson glow that overspread the marble features. "Is it?—I think—O Muriel, I *know* thou lovest Guy de Montmédi." Muriel's face was hidden in her hands, and Madeline continued: "But why should this grieve or shame thee, Muriel? Thy love is no unsought one. The Count Guy loves thee well."

"Yes," Muriel murmured; "he loves me—I know it, I feel it—too well, too much. Though he has never spoken one word of love, my own heart tells me life without me would be to him as a summer without sunshine—a casket without a gem. O Madeline, were it only my own heart-strings that must be rent asunder, my own life that must be trampled under foot, the sacrifice were easy. But *his* too—*his*!"

"What sacrifice, Muriel?"

"Thou knowest, Madeline, and thou only. Often have I told thee how from my childhood a voice has called me, bidding me yield the empty joys and sinful affections of earth in exchange for the purity and unutterable blessedness of a life of sanctity. At first I deemed that voice one of authority and terror; from thee I learned it was one of love. Thou badest me follow the Good Shepherd wherever he led. And he bids me follow him, Madeline, in the path of self-denial and suffering. He bids me leave home, and friends, and life, and love, even as he left all for me. Others are faithless, and forsaking him. He bids me cleave to him,—him only. I turned a deaf ear when this might have been. Now it seems impossible,—oh, impossible!"

"Art thou sure it is his voice that calls thee to do this? Muriel, there are those who think that it is in the home and family, and not in the cloister, in which we can serve him best,—in which he most delights."

"Hush, hush, Madeline ; I may not listen to such words. Satan whispers such thoughts to me at times. Already have I listened too much to the heresies he is spreading by misguided men in these dark days."

"The gospel is no heresy, Muriel."

"The gospel ! No ; but men's construction of that gospel ! O Madeline, if thou lovest me, tempt me not !"

Greatly distressed and bewildered, Madeline was silent ; and after a time Muriel continued : "It was because I feared that thou, fresh from the teachings of the heretic Zwingli, might take part with my own weak heart, that I have held thus aloof from thee. And I had been too nearly engulfed in the black abyss of heresy to risk my soul again. But my heart feels to-night as if it must unburden itself or burst. After thou leftest I was happy in the trust I learned from thee ; and in the words of the preachers of Baden and Basle I thought I had met with a doctrine that exactly suited me. Ah, it did suit me, for it left me free to dream of holding earth in one hand and heaven in the other. Everywhere men's minds and mouths were full of the light that was breaking, calling it God's light. Luther, they said, was cleansing the windows of the Church, that the long-hidden sun of God's word of truth might shine through them once more. Raymond, thou knowest, joined us, and Guy de Montmédi. Both were full of Luther's teachings and triumphs, and I allowed myself to be swept along with the current. But when I came home, slowly, slowly I began to see whither all this tended ; but it was not till Luther's true colours were shown in that impious bonfire of the 10th of December, that I saw how fearful had been my error in substituting his new doctrines for the holy faith of the Church of Christ ; not till a few days after, when my father announced to me that he had accepted Guy de Montmédi as my suitor, and bade me prepare for my betrothal to him, that I learned why I had so willingly allowed myself to be blinded. I had not known whence came the vague, dreamy happiness that filled my heart. I knew then.

"But grace was given me to put aside the cup mantling high with life's richest wine. The struggle was sharp, and the temptation strong; but I told my father I could never be an earthly bride, and besought him not to withstand my following out my vocation and forming the only betrothal that was possible to me. His anger and my mother's tears—O Madeline, they were hard to bear, without the sudden clouding of that mysterious inner light which had shone in my heart through every conflict since I had left Basle! I dreaded Raymond's displeasure, too; but he wrote as usual, playfully and tenderly, only telling what needed not, Guy's worth, and truth, and nobleness. And from that time my father's manner changed; that evening he told me I should not be betrothed against my will; and since then no word has been spoken; but I see now they have thought love would conquer where force might fail. How it has been since Guy came thou knowest, Madeline, and wherefore I wrote to beseech thee to come to me."

"Yet till now thou hast seemed to shun me, Muriel."

"Ah, Madeline, I can only say again, forgive me,—pity me! Didst thou know how this poor heart of mine is drawn hither and thither,—now by the rushing tide of earthly love,—now by the solemn mandate or gentle entreaty, 'Follow me,'—now by the weak shrinking of the flesh,—now by the strong strivings of the spirit,—now by the seductive whispers of Satan—thou wouldst."

"I do. But oh, Muriel, surely God wills not this anguish! He is love!"

"I know it. I know it. But he is terror too. He comes to me as both. Sometimes with bleeding brow, and pierced hands, and wounded side, and eyes whose sorrowful pleadings pierce my soul. Then he points to his wounds and says, 'I suffered this for thee; wilt thou not follow me?' and to the records of those who have left all for his dear sake, and says, 'They suffered thus for me; wilt thou not follow them?'"

There was a strange light on Muriel's face, and her dark eyes

seemed to glow with mystic fire as she spoke with them upraised to the strip of night-sky. Madeline gazed upon her in awed silence, and presently she continued: "Then my heart answers, 'Lord, I can, I will;' and my whole soul glows with fervour. But I go forth to daily life once more,—father, mother, Raymond, home,—one. I thought I could not give *them* up, Madeline. Yet now, if they were all—but *he* comes, and all my vows, all my resolutions, melt like snow in the sunshine of his presence. O Madeline, once I meet the deep, tender gaze of those earnest eyes, I am weak as water! And listening to the tones of that deep, thrilling voice, I forget all, everything, but *him*, his presence. And then when he is gone, and I am alone with my own heart, God comes to me in terror. I see the lightnings of his wrath ready to be hurled at my guilty head, and my soul grows faint with horror at the judgments I may bring, not on myself alone, alas!" and Muriel shuddered as if with deadly fear.

"Dear Muriel, all God's wrath, all terror, all judgment were borne by Christ, all fell upon his head that none might be left for us. It is Satan that deceives thee thus."

"No, Madeline, no! I will tell thee what Satan bids me do: close my heart to the call of God; open it to the joys of earth; cast away the divine and eternal for the human and fleeting; take Guy's love for time, and lose Christ's for eternity."

"Christ's love can never be lost,—it is eternal, like himself."

"It can be lost by mortal sin, deliberate choice. Madeline, I fear my own heart. And when, sometimes, I remember that but one short league divides me from a blessed retreat in which this struggle might be ended at once and for ever, I think it would be best to take it: better the swift, sharp stroke, than the gradual, slow tearing of one's very heart-strings thread by thread."

"But, Muriel, O Muriel! thy mother, thy father, all who love thee—think of their pain."

A low cry broke from Muriel's pale lips. "Oh, it is hard to

bring anguish on those who love me," she said ; "but it must be,—it must be ! And pain is better than God's anger. Yet it is of them I think. For myself, the ceasing of this weary struggle, the rest and peace the cloister-calm would surely bring—"

"Muriel, would the struggle cease ? would the cloister bring peace,—bring calm ? It never could, it never would, without Christ. And time and place are all one to him. She said so, the dying nun. O Muriel, I have stood beside the death-bed of one whose youth passed in conflict such as thine, who, for forty long years—more—sought rest, and peace, and forgetfulness of the past in cloistered cell, and found it not ! And in the light of God's truth, learned at last, she called those long dreary years wasted, and declared that the family, and not the cloister, was God's sacred place on earth. Muriel, let me tell thee of her. Oh, that thou mayst learn at first what she learned at last !" And briefly, forcibly, Madeline related the story of Irma Zorenski.

The early sunbeams were gilding the distant mountain-peaks, and the birds twittering in the ivy that covered the eastern turret in which Madeline's room was situated, when the young girls parted. Not wholly in vain had Madeline brought the pure rays of gospel truth to bear upon Muriel's darkened understanding. The look of despair had passed from her face, the sweet words of grace and love, so familiar to Madeline's lips, had been as oil on her soul's troubled waters, and a quiet, half of weariness, half of hope, had fallen upon her spirit.

But Madeline knew well the root of the matter had not been touched. It is quite possible for the spiritual instinct of a child of God to make him fully aware that a thing is not in accordance with his Father's mind and character, even while he is incapable of logically proving it to be so,—even to himself. And thus it was with Madeline. The words of Sister Elizabeth, more than anything she had heard from the pulpit, had convinced her that what she had hitherto regarded as the

highest expression of the life of God on earth, was really the lowest,—the least pleasing to him,—the least blessed to man ; but when she would have proved this to Muriel, she felt utterly at a loss. Ideas and associations which have been round us from the cradle often retain considerable influence over us, even when we have ceased to regard them as true or worthy of reverence. So as Madeline listened to Muriel's impassioned words, and heard her speak of God's voice in her soul, and saw the fervid enthusiasm that glowed in her dark spiritual eyes, and watched her lovely features kindle with fervour or darken with horror, a feeling of awe came over her,—a dread lest, in persuading Muriel to resist the call that seemed so clear, so unmistakable, she might be fighting against God.

Oh, how she longed for Paul, who was ever ready to meet her every perplexity with an answer from God's Word. She had heard it said that nothing in that Word justified the wilful breaking of family ties, only to let the powers of mind and body rust and decay in seclusion and uselessness. But when the call was so plain. She doubted, she hesitated ; and Muriel saw it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"Fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed."—SCOTT.



ABOUT a month after Madeline's arrival at Vaudemont, the midnight quiet was suddenly broken by the trampling of horses in the court—a rather unusual occurrence; but, supposing it to be either some belated travellers seeking the hospitality of the castle, or perhaps the Baron himself returned from Ohrendorf earlier than they had anticipated, Madeline did not disturb Muriel, and ere morning had almost forgotten the circumstance.

Before sunrise she rose. Early as it was, Muriel's room was empty. Madeline sighed as she passed through it. "O Muriel," she murmured, "if thou wouldst but believe how much He loves thee!—that with all these weary vigils and prayers thou art but vainly striving to do what He has already done for thee; and—I think—I am sure—wounding and grieving him. Thy clinging, simple trust, would be sweeter to his heart than all thine agonies and struggles. For the one he asks thee, for the other he does not."

The shadow rested on her gentle face as she slowly and thoughtfully climbed the winding turret-stair leading to the battlements, whither she usually repaired at that hour. The dewy freshness of the sweet May morning soon chased from her mind all but pleasant feelings, and leaning against the

corner of the southern turret, she drank in the fresh mountain air, and watched the pale pink hue on the highest mountain-top, as it gradually deepened to the richest crimson, and, stealing down the snow-clad slopes, caught peak after peak, while the bases were still wrapt in violet mist, and the fair panorama of meadow, wood, and stream lay in deep green shadow. Sweet thoughts of the loved ones in the dear home lying far beyond the distant mountains, blended with others of Him who, like the sun, was with them and her alike.

Suddenly the sound of firm steps, certainly not Muriel's light footfall, rang out along the flagged pathway that led round the battlements. Somewhat startled, Madeline turned quickly round, and found herself face to face with—her deliverer of Basle!

The slight figure had become manly and muscular in the two years that had passed; a dark moustache covered the upper lip; but in an instant she recognized him,—while he exclaimed, with a quick flash of pleased, wondering recognition lighting up his brilliant dark eyes, "*Madeline! Thou, and here!*"

"Thou hast not forgotten me?" he asked, after a moment's pause; for Madeline, startled and confused, made no movement to take the hand he eagerly extended to her.

"No," she said, recovering herself; "you are the knight who so kindly came to my help in Basle."

"I am; there is my credential," he said laughingly, sweeping back the dark waves of hair from his forehead, and revealing a small scar on the right temple. "And thou art really Madeline Reinhardt, and Madeline Reinhardt is thou. Tell me so, or I shall think I am dreaming."

"Yes, I am Madeline Reinhardt," she answered, smiling; and, as a swift thought struck her, she added, interrogatively, "And you are?"

"Raymond de Couci de Vaudemont and von Ohrendorf, at your service, fair lady," he answered, playfully removing his cap, and bowing low. "And seeing I am Muriel's brother, Madeline," he continued, more gravely, "were this our first

sudden remembrance that she was no longer defending her ideal, but speaking to its actual embodiment.

But Raymond only said eagerly, "Then if I have been in thy thoughts, Madeline, it has not been as one whose very name must have caused abhorrence in a breast pure as thine."

"I knew you were not the Count von Berlach, but I knew not till now you were the Count Raymond von Ohrendorf. I have spoken of my adventure in Basle to Lady Muriel; and once she said, 'If my brother had been at Basle, I should have hoped that thy preserver might prove to be he. What thou tellest me of him was so like Raymond.' But you were in Leipzig."

"I had only come to Basle the previous day to transact some pressing business for a sick fellow-student, and intended leaving on the morrow. It is quite possible I may have never mentioned that journey; and I thought it was later when thou camest to Vaudemont, Madeline."

"No; I left next day but one with the Baron."

"With my father? Then he and I were in Basle at the same time without knowing it. But how was it I was told thou wert Madeline Kauffmann?"

"I know not. Unless—yes—Hertha Kauffmann had a friend—a cousin, it may be—from Berne staying with her. Her name was Madeline."

"And it was by that name only I could inquire for thee. Now I think the mystery is cleared."

"I hope you did not suffer long from your wound, Count Raymond? I fear it was more severe than I thought."

"Oh, it was not much. And I would gladly have risked a dozen such for the same end. But, Madeline," he said in a graver tone, "how is it with Muriel, my sister?"

The shade that fell upon Madeline's face answered, and was reflected upon Raymond's. But at that instant Muriel herself appeared, and Madeline left the recently reunited brother and sister alone together.



He declared his immovable resolution to take the Word of
God as his sole rule and guide.

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CHAPTER XXX. •

A CONFESSION.

"I know not how to tell thee!
Shame rises in my face and interrupts
The story of my tongue."—OTWAY.



THE spring of 1521 witnessed strange things in Germany. On the 18th of April the son of the poor miner of Mansfeld, the humble monk who had begged through the streets at Erfurt, and who still lived quietly in the Augustinian convent of Wittenberg, appeared before the most powerful sovereign of Europe and a brilliant assembly of princes and nobles in the hall of the Imperial Diet at Worms. And there, unawed by the presence of royalty and the dangers that menaced him, he calmly, boldly, yet with noble humility, declared his immovable resolution to take the Word of God as his sole rule and guide, and not to retract one word of his writings that could not be proved to be contrary to the teachings of its sacred pages; concluding with the noble words, "*Here I am. I cannot do otherwise: God help me. Amen.*"

A thrill of wonder, of admiration even, had run through the assembly. Truth had triumphed. The partisans of Rome were foiled and confounded, the friends of the gospel rejoiced. In vain the young Emperor issued an edict which pronounced Luther a madman, a fool, a man possessed of the devil, and placed him and his adherents under the ban of the empire;

truth had triumphed—a mighty impulse had been given to the cause of the gospel, while its adversaries had sustained a disastrous check.

But at the time this was scarcely realized. Rome had remained nominally mistress of the field ; and the clouds that had long been silently gathering against the Reformation seemed about to burst in a terrible storm. The nobility of Germany, for the most part, uttered threatening words and grasped their swords ; the teachers of the truth looked up to God, whose opportunity comes with man's extremity ; the people feared and doubted.

In the midst of this universal agitation Luther disappeared suddenly—mysteriously. From town to town, from hamlet to hamlet, from province to province, the tidings spread. For weeks he was mourned as dead. Even his dearest friends were ignorant of his friendly captivity in the old fortress of the Wartburg.

Meanwhile, if Luther's voice was silenced, earnest defenders of the truth were left ; and in spite of the Pope's bull and the Emperor's ban, the light of the gospel spread more and more. In Zurich it was so to a high degree. The opposition of the monks and the adherents of the old doctrine served only to fan the flame of zeal in the heart of Zwingli. He and his curate Stäheli were indefatigable in their labours ; and while as yet no outward reform had been attempted, the light was beginning to show the glaring deformities and inconsistencies that had been little noticed in the old darkness.

Autumn had come. No change had taken place in the quiet household of the Reinhardts. Paul was better, but still a feeble, helpless invalid, dependent as a child on those around him ; but patient, tranquil, happy, daily bearing unconscious testimony to the reality of the faith that supported him to those who remembered him as he was before he had it. And by degrees, among the ever-widening circle of his acquaintances, it became acknowledged that no one could meet a difficulty, or smooth away a perplexity, or sympathize with trial and distress

of body or spirit, like Paul Reinhardt ; and many a burdened, anxious heart, was helped and cheered, many a troubled conscience set at rest, many a darkened mind enlightened, by his low, feeble voice, gently, tenderly, yet with calm, settled, confidence, telling of Jesus—Jesus only.

In the summer, Gerold von Knonau had been sent to prosecute his studies at Basle, by Zwingle, who, as we have said, had conceived a fatherly affection for the bright, talented boy, and wished to procure for him better advantages than could be enjoyed at Zurich. This was a great loss to Paul, but it opened a new field of usefulness. A few days before he left, Gerold had brought to him a stranger, who had come to study at Zurich, and asked Paul to help the shy, backward youth, in his studies as he himself had hitherto done. Paul willingly consented, and this acquaintance led to others. Young, earnest spirits, groping after the truth, often gathered round the couch of the suffering, crippled youth, and were led by him to seek in the inspired pages of the Word of Truth not only weapons wherewith to defeat their opponents in doctrine, and arguments wherewith to refute them in practice, but living words of grace and power coming straight from the heart of God to their own heart, and bringing them face to face, not with a salvation only, but with a Saviour. The power of Paul's mind, weakened as it was by suffering, was such as to command their respect ; and he had attained to great proficiency in Greek, and was advancing in a knowledge of Hebrew.

Paul little knew, when his heart burned within him with earnest longings to help in the great work of pouring into other hearts the pure, heavenly light, that had shone so sweetly upon his own darkened life, or when he wrestled with feelings of sadness and depression that would rise in his heart when he thought of himself lying idle there, while the world's field was so white to harvest, how strong was his influence, how important his work—unknown, unmarked indeed, except by Him who was leading him by a way that he knew not.

He began to recognize now how much he had built upon the impression left on his mind by the dream or vision that had preceded his recovery—how strong had been his belief that some *great* work awaited him, that some *great* part would be allotted to him. He had read and had believed that “with God all things are possible,” and had looked for nothing less than perfectly restored health. He had thought, with beating heart, how great would be the glory brought to God, how utterly every power of his mind and body should be consecrated to his service, how fully and unequivocally he would confess him before men, how faithfully and fearlessly display the banner of his truth. But a year and more had passed, and with the fading leaves of the second autumn his hopes fell too. The fluctuations of convalescence had ceased, and slowly, painfully he was forced to acknowledge that his health had settled down into its normal state.

The disappointment and pain were very great. Satan was at his right hand to whisper dark suggestions, to stir up his spirit to repining and despondency. And sometimes the battle was very sore; and something of the old bitterness would rise in his heart as he thought of all he might be, all he might do, if the mighty hand, for which nothing was too hard, would but touch the fetters of disease and weakness, and let the oppressed go free. Yes; Paul had many a dark hour still. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; and those who serve beneath his banner must go through the same training. Happy those who, like Paul, pass through the darkness clinging to the pierced hand which never releases its grasp, and listening to the low, sweet whisper, “Fear not; I am with thee.”

It had been a dreary summer to “little Clare,” as she was still called, though she had shot up into a tall, slight girl, of eleven. In Madeline’s long previous absence she had learned to depend chiefly upon Gerold for help and sympathy, and now he too was gone. And, in her loneliness of heart, Clare turned

and clung to her grave elder sister as she had never done before. It may be that her perceptions were opening—that she had penetrated behind the chilling reserve in which Bertha enveloped herself, and saw there a poor, tired, hungry heart, pining for the very sympathy it so rigidly fenced out. However this may be, Clare evinced for Bertha an affection at once confiding, patient, and unobtrusive in spite of many a rebuff, such as would wholly have disconcerted her timid, sensitive spirit, a short time before. The pet and darling of the household, a cold look or a harsh word was agony to her, and it was chiefly through Bertha she knew the pain of either. In Paul's darkest days he had rarely been so petulant with her as with the rest; and then he was "poor Paul," from whom everything was allowable, and no one else ever even found fault with her. Indeed, there was little cause; hers was a nature so soft and tender, answering so readily to the gentle curb of love, that other restraint was never necessary.

And it was not the might of earthly love alone that influenced Clare; she had early learned the constraining power of the love of Christ, and the natural sweetness of her character, joined to the meekness and beauty of a spirit resting in simple, child-like faith, upon the word and love of Jesus, made her life seem almost faultless.

Perhaps the child's trustful love was sent as a gently falling dew to soften the parched furrows and break up the fallow ground of Bertha's heart. For the change in which Paul and Madeline hoped was more perceptible now. There was less bitterness in her manner, yet more sadness; and Paul's heart ached to see one so sorely needing the comfort and sympathy of Jesus still turning a deaf ear to his tender pleadings. But he remembered his own long struggle in darkness, when in the midst of an ocean of light he had resolutely kept his eyes shut; and remembering this, he hoped and prayed for Bertha.

The summer wore on and passed; the first autumn tints were appearing in the rich woods that clothed the undulating

slopes on the shores of the lake, when the long monotony of Bertha's inner life was broken by a startling incident. One day when she was busy with her household concerns, Clare came and told her that a stranger was waiting to see her in the parlour. "He asked to see thee alone, Bertha," she said, "so I took him into the blue parlour. And when I asked his name, he answered so strangely: 'It is not one she will care to hear,' he said; 'tell her only a stranger wishes to see her.' Who can it be, Bertha?"

A swift, sudden thought, flashed into Bertha's mind, turning her heart cold and sick, and driving the blood from lip and cheek.

Clare was frightened. "O Bertha!" she cried, "do not go to him, if thou art afraid. Let me go and call Max; he is with Paul."

But Bertha held her back. "No, no, Clare," she said; "I am weak—I am foolish. But tell me,—this stranger, what is he like?"

"A tall, soldier-like man, with bronzed, bearded face, and quick, restless black eyes," Clare replied, gazing anxiously into Bertha's agitated face.

"Not *he*, then," she murmured to herself; "fool that I was to think it." Then rising, she added, "Do not look so frightened, Clare. It is doubtless only some student bringing a letter of introduction to my father, or to us in general. I have been foolish to frighten thee by questions. There, go on tying down these preserves while I see who this mysterious stranger may be. This way, see." And Bertha, striving to regain her usual manner, set Clare to work, and then proceeded directly to the blue parlour, chiding herself as she went for giving way to the unreasonable panic that had so alarmed Clare.

Yet, in spite of herself, her heart fluttered and her hand trembled as she opened the door and found herself in the stranger's presence. He stood with his back to the window, the light from which fell full upon Bertha's face, paler and

sterner than usual with the effort she was making to repress her agitation. "Bertha!" he exclaimed in a tone expressive at once of shock and pain.

She started—a quick shudder ran through her frame, and she suddenly laid her hands against the back of a carved chair that stood near, as if to steady herself.

"Yes, Bertha," she said with a bitter smile on her pale lips. "Thou seest me changed, Kaspar Nordeck."

"Changed indeed. And oh, Bertha, it is I who am to blame!" The last words were almost inaudible.

"Ten years do not pass without leaving footprints on fair faces and happy lives," she said slowly. "Thou must find many changes in Zurich?"

"Yes," he answered absently, still gazing at the face on which those ten years had indeed left traces. "Thou art wondering why I am here," he said, after a pause; "why I seek thee alone—I, whose name is a word of bitterness to thy heart."

"It is not *thy* fault that it is so, Kaspar," she answered, with bitter emphasis. "The criminal feels no anger against the pen that seals his doom." Then silence fell; while each knew well the other's thoughts went back to a bright summer morning ten years before, when they two had last met in that very room.

Bertha was the first to break it. "Kaspar," she said, "the Bertha Reinhardt thou knewest exists no longer; and the withered leaves of ten summers are heaped upon her grave and that of the past she lived in. What wouldst thou with *me*?"

He answered gravely and sadly. "Knowing how my presence must bring back that cruel past, I had not sought thee lightly, Bertha. And to see thee, and thee alone, I came to Zurich. I have a story to tell thee. Nay, thou must listen!" For Bertha had made a movement as if to stop his words.

"Not if it is the same, Kaspar—the oft-told story that I bade thee never tell again."

"I might tell that too," he answered. "It would be true; but it is not that. Bertha, I have wronged thee. O Bertha!

I have wronged thee cruelly. God has forgiven me ; canst thou ?”

The colour faded from Bertha's rigid lips, a wild, strange light gleamed in her dark eyes, and the hand she laid on Kaspar's arm was cold as death. “Kaspar,” she said, in a low, hoarse whisper, “what meanest thou ? Speak !”

“That it was I that steeped with poison the dart that pierced thy heart, Bertha. Oh ! look not on me thus, or I cannot tell thee.”

“Quick ! quick !” she gasped. “Was it false ?—was it false ?” Her eyes seemed searching his very soul.

“O Bertha ! forgive me. I loved thee so !” was all he said, as he covered his face with his hands.

Bertha stood motionless with clasped hands and fixed gaze ; then, as her mind took in the conviction that bewildered it, she murmured, “True, true, my Heinrich !—true ! O God ! I thank thee,” and burst into a flood of tears.

Kaspar stood with bowed head and downcast eyes. Those words and those tears fell like molten lead on his heart. “Bertha,” he said at-last, “thou art right ; he was true to thee—no earthly power parted you.”

She raised her face, bathed with tears, but illumined with a strange light. “Then it was only death,” she said. “Oh, my Heinrich, could I but have wept over thy grave these years !”

Kaspar hid his face and groaned. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” He was reaping the bitter fruits of his own base and cruel deception in the keen realization of the anguish it had caused the woman he loved. “*Only death !*” Bitterly had Kaspar repented his sin—plainly had he seen his error ; but not till that hour had he learned how deadly had been the poison he had infused into a cup already sufficiently bitter. In the changed face of Bertha he had read a tale of suffering that had pierced his heart ; and not of suffering only, but also of the warping of a noble nature by the cruel blight of a broken trust. “*Only death !*” With these words came swift

overpowering comprehension of what that suffering had been, what was the canker-worm that had eaten out the bloom and beauty of her life. Not the trial God had sent her, but the venom *he* had infused into it.

But suddenly Bertha looked up, and said, "But is *this* truth? Dost thou tell me truth, Kaspar?"

"It is truth, Bertha," he answered, in a low, sad voice; "and what I told thee before was truth; my error was in letting thee believe what was false. Heinrich was true to thee; but he died not."

"Died not! Does he live? Kaspar art thou mad, or I?" and she pressed her hands to her throbbing brow.

"He died to thee, Bertha, and to the world. He entered the Augustinian convent at Antwerp."

"Then he did forsake me after all," she said sadly, the light fading from her dark, mournful eyes.

"O Bertha! blame him not. Hadst thou seen, as I did, the bitter anguish of his soul! He only yielded after a struggle that went near to part soul and body."

For a few moments Bertha spoke not, and then she said, brokenly, "But why did he not tell me this? Why did he doom me to the anguish of believing him untrue? O Heinrich, it was cruel—it was cruel!"

"He did not. Bertha, Bertha, that was my work! Listen while I tell thee all."

"The *truth*, Kaspar Nordeck!" she said with reproachful bitterness.

"Before God," he answered solemnly—"before him whose blessed light is searching now into earth's dark places, into men's still darker hearts. It has shone into mine, Bertha, and brought me here to confess my shame and sin. Yes, let thine eyes search into mine, they will not quail;" for Bertha's eyes were fixed upon him with a piercing gaze that never once wavered while he went on. "Thou knowest how I loved thee, Bertha, in those far-off early days; how blind I was in not see-

ing why thy heart was so steeled against all my pleadings; with what a shock of pain they were opened at last, when, in thy first flush of happiness, thou answeredst my last appeal before I left Zurich with the avowal that thy troth was privately plighted with thy parents' consent.

“I went to Antwerp, and there too came Heinrich. I felt no enmity against him; he was so noble, so much more worthy of thee than I; and from him I could hear of thee. So I sought and obtained his friendship. He was employed, as thou knowest, to paint some altar-pieces for the great Augustinian convent. I need not speak to thee of the enthusiasm which ever glowed in his artist nature—the depth of pious reverence with which he regarded all the sacred mysteries of the Church. When he first came to Antwerp he was full of dreams of fame, which yet he seemed to value only for thy sake. But by degrees he grew grave, abstracted, depressed; the light went from his eye, the colour from his cheek. I watched him with wonder and perplexity. He shunned me; and at last I found that the mention of thy name struck him with a shiver of pain. So months went on. A deadly fever seized him while engaged with his work at the monastery. He was placed in the infirmary; and there, surrounded only by the monks, he wrestled long and painfully with death. Their skill and his youth conquered; he recovered. When he came forth again, Bertha, even thou wouldst scarce have known him. It was not only the ravages of illness, it was as if but the ghost of himself had returned from the gates of the grave.

“And it was then he told me all. How, soon after he commenced his work at the monastery, clear, strong, and unmistakable, the voice of God had spoken in his soul, bidding him yield all—earth, fame, thee. Desperately had he struggled, but, he said, in vain. On his fevered bed, in the dread shadow of death and eternity, he had learned fearful things, and had vowed, in the awful light which then blazed into his shivering soul, to sacrifice *thee*, even *thee*, so it and thine might be saved

O Bertha, how he loved thee even then ! Believe me, I did all I could ; but what was my feeble voice against the influences that surrounded him on every side ? In vain I represented to him that the zeal of the monks was crafty and selfish—that it was not his soul they valued, but the lustre his talents would shed upon their order and their convent. My words—doubtless they were wild and bitter, for I had been brought up in hatred and contempt of the monks and priests—were to him blasphemous impiety, and served but to fan the flame of his zeal. Oh, it was a mournful thing—it is doubly mournful in the remembrance of it in the light cast upon it by the gospel of God's grace—to see the utter wreck of that noble, promising, young life, amidst the rocks of error and the mists of superstition.

“ It was at that time, Bertha—when, with the consciousness of new life returning to his frame, the old hopes and the old desires that had grown dim and faint in the hours of exhaustion and suffering returned, and blending with the old love that had never waned, drew him back to the earth he had vowed to leave, with almost resistless force—that he wrote to thee a long, long letter, which would have told thee all had it reached thee.”

“ But it did not ! oh, it did not ! ” moaned Bertha.

“ No ; would that it had ! then had I been saved the remorse that has weighed on my life these years past. At last the end of all this came. One day a lay brother from the monastery came, with a request from Brother Heinrich, that I would go and take leave of him, and receive his last message for the outer world. It was what I had expected. I went. Through a grating I saw him—thy Heinrich—in the dress of the order ; the prior was beside him. He gave me through the bars the troth-plight I returned thee, and under the prior's eyes traced the few lines which accompanied it. But, Bertha, if he ever loved thee, he loved thee then. After he had laid down the troth-plight, he suddenly caught it up, pressed it to his lips and his heart, and drawing his cowl over his face, turned away.

“ I left Antwerp at once to bring thee the tidings, Bertha.

God is my witness, no thought of treachery was in my heart when I entered this room that day. It yearned over thee with unspeakable love and compassion ; and an hour before I did the deed I should have loathed myself for conceiving it, as I have ever done since for committing it. What passed in that interview thou rememberest too well !”

“ Things graven on stone are not easily effaced ; and my heart became such that day,” she answered bitterly.

“ Well, I need not dwell upon it. Only, Bertha, when I found that, by some chance, Heinrich’s letter had never reached thee, and that thou hadst at once, by a connection inexplicable to me, linked the broken troth-plight with Francesca Giorno, a sudden, fierce temptation seized me. Thy Heinrich, noble, true, exalted to saintliness by the immolation of his heart’s best and dearest treasures upon the Church’s altar, would ever reign in thy heart’s holy place, and doubtless thou wouldst follow his example, and shroud thy fair flowering youth in the cloister’s gloom. But Heinrich faithless, perjured ! Oh, thou wouldst cast him from that heart as a worthless thing, and in time be won to accept the love that rejection, absence, and time could neither weaken nor efface. So I let thee believe the phantom thine own fancy had conjured up.”

“ But surely thou didst tell me that he had married an Italian bride !”

“ I did not, Bertha. When I had answered thy first terrified questions, and assured thee that he lived, thinking the shortest method the kindest, I gave thee the paper and the troth-plight, saying, what I truly thought, ‘ Heinrich’s last letter will have prepared thee for this, Bertha.’ For a time thou stoodest, as I believe, deaf and blind, and as if turned to stone, heeding not my entreaties that thou wouldst move, or speak, or at least listen while I told thee all. I meant *all* even then, Bertha. ‘ There is no need to tell me more,’ thou saidst at last, in a voice whose hollow calm thrilled me with pain and fear ; ‘ I understand it all.’

"I sought to comfort thee, and said I had hoped that that last letter had broken the shock, and asked hadst thou indeed received it. 'Oh yes,' thou saidst, 'I received it. But I was dull and comprehended it not. To my simple mind pure love and plighted troth were safeguards even from such charms as those of the fair Francesca Giorno. I was very blind, no doubt.'

"A sudden flash of intelligence passed through my mind; at once I seemed to comprehend all. Thou hadst not received the true, 'last letter;' thou wert believing Heinrich fickle, faithless, forsworn. To him this could not signify; to me it might make all the difference. The burning love in my heart sprang up passionate and strong, sweeping all before it. It needed no spoken lie from me. I heard thee speak the words, 'Italian bride;' what more thou saidst I know not. Another instant, I was at thy feet, in my mad folly pleading with thee to accept the love that would never fail thee. I spoke no word of falsehood, but none the less was the shame—the sin!"

He covered his face with his hands for a moment, and then continued: "The reproach in thine eyes touches me to the quick, Bertha, and yet I deserve it. But I have repented; I repented ere, with white cold lips, thou hadst spoken the words that made me feel how hopeless was the love that had tempted to such a deed."

"And if thou didst repent, why didst thou leave me still believing what has made earth a wilderness, life not a blank—worse—a cemetery filled with the graves of dead hopes and trust? Had I deemed Heinrich dead, I had not become the cold, bitter being I am. And the cloister was to me, then, at least, as sacred as the grave. To have known him true to his vow, would have taken the sting from his desertion. I might have yielded him to God *then*."

"Perhaps I might, Bertha, if thou wouldst but have listened to my prayers, and let me have seen thee once more. But thou wouldst not; and when I wrote thee, thou didst return my letter unopened."

"I was so bitter with my secret pain ; and I thought it was but to press again thy suit. But what made thee come and tell me now, after all these weary years?"

"I will tell thee, Bertha. For years I have lived a wild, reckless life. I had no family ties ; and thou wert lost to me. I lived in the present, striving to forget the past and the future, a callous, dissipated soldier of fortune. But last year, no matter how or where, Christ found me. His voice bore the gospel message to my soul. In the very midst of my sins he came to me and spoke pardon and peace. He forgave, not only the sin that had been the first step in my downward career, but all that had followed and preceded it. And with his forgiveness came a yearning need of thine. Wilt thou grant it, Bertha?"

"I forgive thee, indeed, Kaspar," she said ; "but oh, thou hast wrought me a cruel wrong ! And thou canst not give me back what I have lost."

"Dear Bertha,—ay, dear still, dearer to me than aught else upon earth—nay, fear not, I shall never again press the love so fatal to thy peace,—dear Bertha, there is One who can give thee more, One who has borne the burden of a world's distrust and slight for fifteen hundred years, and who yet is unchanged,—love, all love. Bertha, hast thou not shared the light that shines so brightly in this favoured city ? Hast thou found no balm for thy rankling wound in the blessed gospel of Christ?"

"I told thee, Kaspar, that my heart turned to stone that day,—a stone feels not, hopes not, trusts not !"

Tears rose in Kaspar's eyes as he looked into the faded face he remembered so bright and sparkling in its happy youthful bloom. "God comfort thee !" he said at last. "It is over such poor crushed hearts as thine his yearns most. 'He healeth the broken in heart.' And now, farewell ; my purpose is accomplished."

"Stay," she said quickly ; "I would ask thee two questions Francesca Giorno, what of her?"

"Her father died shortly before Heinrich entered the monastery. She married a poor but talented young artist who had long been attached to her. Heinrich gave the money he had received for his last picture as dowry to the orphan girl; and this enabled them to marry at once. Even for that his conscience reproached him."

"And—didst thou ever see or hear aught of *him* again?"

"Once I saw him, some years past. He was begging alms for the convent in the streets. Poor Heinrich!"

"Was he changed? How looked he, Kaspar?" Bertha's voice was low and broken, her eyes shaded with her hand.

"He *was* changed; so much changed I had not known him, had he not suddenly raised those wonderful eyes of his to my face. He knew me, but he would neither stay nor speak. And he looked—O Bertha, how does a plant look shut out from God's free air and sunshine? And all I could hear of him was, that the hopes of the order had been disappointed, that his artist power had waned from the time he took the vows, and that he had ceased to exercise it. He was then simply an ordinary brother. There lies heavy guilt at the door of the false, corrupt system, of man's making and ordering, which has put asunder the two lives God had joined together, thus blighting both."

Bertha had risen, and stood quiet and silent. For a few minutes Kaspar stood silent too, then taking her passive hand in his, he said, "Farewell, Bertha, for ever on earth. Thy dear face was with me through all those years of sin and folly, the one pure remembrance that kept me from utter ruin of body and soul. It will be with me still—a sad, remorseful memory, now I know all my cruel deceit has done for thee. But I shall yet see it, brighter and fairer far than in its youthful bloom, where the mists, and shadows, and darkness of earth will be passed away for ever. God bless thee, and send the healing dew of his love upon thy poor, bruised heart. Strive to forgive the madness of one dark hour, for the sake of the love that has

been so strong, and deep, and faithful—that will be thine as long as this heart continues to beat. Farewell, Bertha!”

A kiss pressed upon her cold, trembling hand, a long, long gaze upon her pale, agitated face, and he was gone. Bertha was alone with her sorrow and her joy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUMMER SUNSHINE.

"A perfect satisfaction,
A fulness of delight,
A sense of gliding onward,
Through regions ever bright."—H. G. ADAMS.

BRIGHTLY had the summer days glided by round the old gray castle on the slopes of the rocky Juras ; brightly had the joyous sun shone in the blue, smiling heavens ; brightly had the rejoicing streams flowed on, dancing to their own glad music ; brightly had the flowers bloomed, and the birds sung, and the green leaves fluttered in the free mountain air. To Madeline, at least, it seemed that never before had summer been crowned with such sunshine and such flowers. Why, she could scarcely have told ; yet there were many reasons why it should be so.

First, the ever growing and deepening sense of God's love, and of his infinite, unspeakable goodness ; the joy of taking all earthly love and pleasures from his hands, as well as all heavenly gifts and blessings. Secondly, the good news that came from the dear ones in the old home in Zurich : the long, precious letters, in Paul's feeble writing, so full of peace and trust, and tender, patient answers to all her queries and perplexities ; the hopes for Bertha ; the pleasant consciousness of being loved, and missed, and longed for, even while all were prospering and happy. Thirdly, Muriel's happiness ; the joy of seeing the

love-light shining unchecked in those sweet, pensive eyes, the faint rose hue deepening on the delicate cheek when one well-known voice or step met the quick ear, the trustful folding of the small soft hands over the arm on which she leant in the terraced garden walks or in the green forest paths. Fourthly, the love, and courtesy, and universal kindness and consideration which she, the simple burgher maiden, received from high and low in that stately castle home. Fifthly, the simple pleasures, and innocent, healthful pastimes, with which those summer days were so filled.

Five reasons for being happy! Enough, surely; and so Madeline told herself. Yet she was conscious, in a vague, undefinable way, of something more,—of a sixth reason, which outweighed all the others, of a glamour in her sight which would have made wintry snows, and bare hill-sides, and leafless woods, and leaden skies, brighter and fairer than summer sunshine without it! But what this was she did not know, or perhaps did not dare to ask. And her nature was too simple for the morbid self-analysis which was the bane of Muriel's life.

The formal betrothal between Muriel and Guy de Montmédi had not yet taken place, but was to be celebrated with the usual festivities at the end of October.

Raymond's return had done much to rouse Muriel from her morbid depression; he took care she had little leisure for solitary brooding, and above all kept her and Agnes apart. And one lovely June evening she had come from a stroll in the walk through the fringe of pines that skirted the mountain-side above the highest slope of the terraced garden, with her hands clasped over Guy's arm, and a sweet, calm, resolute look upon her lovely face; and Guy's proudly happy bearing as he led her up to the Lady Ermengarde, who sat in a sheltered alcove at the end of the walk, revealed to Madeline what made her heart thrill with joy.

Tears of gladness sprang to her eyes, and looking up she met Raymond's answering gaze. "Thank God," he said, "she

is saved,—saved from a life that is not life, nor yet death ;—a meaningless void, an empty space, whence all God's purposes are foiled by man's unholy influence."

And that night, when they were alone together, Muriel said to Madeline, with the same soft, steady light in her eyes, "Madeline, I have been wrong. This deep, pure love, is no sin ; it is, as thou so truly sayest, the thing most akin to God in this poor sinful world. I should never have thought it sin but for Agnes. She is a good and holy woman, but in this I think she is wrong. O Madeline ! this evening, when those deep tones that ever thrill my heart spoke such words of earnest, pleading love, my heart broke through all the bonds and fetters of doubt and fear with one wild throb. I looked up for a moment to the golden sunset sky, and it seemed to smile back the answer, 'God is love.' Then I laid my hand in Guy's, and yielded to him the heart that has been his so long. And, Madeline, it seems to me that I never understood those three simple words, 'God is love,' so fully as I do to-night, in the deep, solemn gladness, that rests upon my spirit. Oh ! if our love, poor, fleeting, human love, be so sweet, so strong, what must *that* love be ?"

"What the sun is to that pale lamp, Muriel,—what the ocean is to the little rivulet in the meadows. And, Muriel, that mighty love is OURS. Ours *freely*, not to be earned, or won, or merited ; ours *now*, not the prize held out at the goal of a weary, toilsome race. Thou seest this at last. O Muriel, thank God, thank God !"

And Muriel repeated, with no shadow on her pale, fair brow, no cloud in her dark upraised eyes, and with a sweet serenity in her low, clear voice, "Thank God ; yes, thank God !"

After that day Madeline naturally feared no more for Muriel. The memories of that summer were to her in after-days like those of one long happy dream :—Long rambles on steep mountain-sides, in rocky dells, or cool green forest paths ; joyous hunting parties and hawking expeditions ; pleasant hours spent

in the castle, or garden, or tennis-court, looking on while Guy and Raymond amused themselves with the games of skill and strength in which it was then the pride of every young noble to excel ; and of others when they talked together of the glories of the past, of the stirring up and awakening of the present, and drew bright pictures of the golden future dawning on a world which had been so long asleep in the dark. Guy's poet-nature revelled in the idyls and epics of the classic page, and many an hour was passed listening to his deep thrilling voice reading or repeating some deathless production of the mighty minds of old ; while Raymond made the past live in the present, seeing in Rome another Troy, and finding an antitype for mythic and classic heroes in the noble men then struggling against mighty wrong and evil. The fiery writings of the daring, impetuous Hütten, then under the ban of the empire, the works of Erasmus and Luther,—all the varied literature that was scattered broadcast through the land, found place in those talks. Guy was the most learned and deeply read, Raymond the most interested in the stirring events passing round. Guy's deep gray eyes would kindle most over some thrilling page of old, Raymond's flash fire over the wrongs and fears and hopes of the present. But both equally ranged themselves on the side of the gospel, and rejoiced in its triumphs.

But Madeline sometimes thought it was rather as a charter of freedom, which would establish the principles of right and truth and liberty against ecclesiastical assumption and Romish tyranny, than as a sweet message of pardoning love to helpless, guilty sinners, that Raymond and Guy regarded that gospel then.

A new world seemed opening to Madeline. It is scarcely to be wondered that, in the new thoughts and interests thronging round her, a blindness such as she afterwards bitterly deplored fell upon her with regard to some things. September came, with a tinge of gold upon the beeches and sycamores that mingled with the dark pine-woods, and a deeper blue in the

bright cloud-flecked sky, and with it a day destined to influence Madeline's whole after-life.

The morning of that day dawned fair and bright, and in the glad early sunshine she set out with Muriel, Raymond, Guy de Montmédi, and several attendants, on a long talked-of expedition to the "Beaume," or ice-cave in the Val de Travers, famous as having in some long-past century been the dwelling-place of one of the innumerable local saints who would have been sought in vain in any calendar, yet with whose revered names were connected legends and miracles at least as wild and improbable as with that of St. Francis himself. Their road led them round steep mountain-sides, through dark pine-woods and rocky ravines, sometimes through picturesque valleys, then again through narrow passes with giant rocks towering overhead, or giddy precipices descending sheer from the narrow pathway along which they wound in single file. Their horses had been left behind at Motiers; and Raymond, as usual, walked by Madeline's mule, Guy by Muriel's, and their young gay voices and merry laughter broke like music on the rocky solitudes through which they passed.

At length they reached the blue dome-like vault, with its sounding echoes and dim, mysterious light; and Muriel, whose frame was less robust than Madeline's, sat down to rest at the foot of a great rock, with her lover beside her, and Madeline was persuaded by Raymond to explore a tempting little pathway a few hundred yards down the mountain, that, like a natural rock staircase, led through a thick growth of dwarf juniper into a deep wooded dell, at the bottom of which a swift stream dashed noisily over its rocky bed. When, after a merry scramble, they reached the bottom of the ravine, the weird, picturesque beauty of the scene, wiled them onward. The free, pure mountain air, and the excitement of the journey, had exhilarated Madeline, and, unconscious of fatigue or of the distance they were wandering from the rest, she eagerly acceded to Raymond's proposal that they should go as far as the two huge

rocks that stood like giant sentinels at the head of the glen, their hoary brows meeting, and thus forming a natural archway.

They reached them, and stepping from rock to rock on the margin of the stream, which was evidently at times an overflowing torrent, passed through the opening. Before them opened out a natural amphitheatre of considerable size, its mountain-sides covered with a thick growth of dark stunted pines, its centre filled with huge bare and ivy-mantled fragments of rock, piled one over the other in wild confusion, like the blocks of a vast Cyclopean workshop. At a little distance a shower of spray appeared beyond a projecting rock, and the rushing fall of water broke the almost oppressive stillness, offering an irresistible incitement to a further scramble. With Raymond's help, Madeline climbed the intervening masses of broken rock, and a small but very beautiful cascade appeared; a considerable body of water poured in a silver sheet from the top of the rock, and reaching an intercepting platform, leaped in a shower of spray into its bed beneath. A bar of dazzling light fell athwart it, where the sunbeams reached it through a cleft in the great rock on the opposite side.

Panting with exertion, Madeline was glad to sit down on the ledge of rock near it. "How beautiful!" she exclaimed. "It was worth the trouble, Count Raymond. Would that Muriel were here!"

"Muriel is better satisfied. I would scarcely have left her by that holy cave, did I not know Guy would not suffer her to dream over the dead man who perhaps, after all, never lived. It is strange what influence such things still have with Muriel! I wish sometimes her betrothal had not been postponed. There is something about her I like not, these last weeks,—a feverish uncertainty, a forced gaiety, or an unaccountable depression. Hast thou not seen it, Madeline?" (Madeline started with the recollection that more than once of late she had thought Muriel less even.) "I see thou hast! and I fear lest when I am gone some mischief may arise. Once let that wily fanatical Agnes

get her ear again, and Heaven knows what will come of it, even now. Were my father at Vaudemont I would persuade him to let it be at once, before I leave for Germany."

"Before thou leavest, Count Raymond!—the time is scarce a month distant now?"

"No, Madeline; but long before that month is past I must be on my way to Italy, at the head of the band I have pledged myself to raise for the Emperor."

Did it all at once grow cold and dark, or was it only that the beam of sunshine died suddenly away from the gray foaming waters?

Madeline did not reply, and her head was turned from Raymond, who continued: "The courier who arrived from Spain last night brought me a private despatch from the Emperor, appointing me to a post in the army now forming on the borders of Italy, and bidding me remember the promise made in person at Worms, so would he redeem his. I must leave Vaudemont in a few days at furthest."

"And Muriel, does she know it?"

"Not yet; I would not spoil her pleasure this day,—perhaps the last of the pleasant rambles we shall have together. They have been very pleasant, Madeline."

"Very," she answered quietly, rising suddenly. "But it is time we went back to Muriel; she will think we are lost."

At the same moment a gust of wind swept through the opening in the rocks, and looking up they were startled to see that a mass of thick black clouds was rapidly overspreading the sky. "It looks like a storm, too," Raymond said; and in another moment they were making their way over the broken rocks into the ravine, Raymond at once assisting Madeline and explaining to her his future prospects. War was on the eve of being declared between Francis I. of France and the Emperor Charles V. The curtain was about to be raised on the first scene of the drama that was to deluge Europe with blood, and, humanly speaking, to save the Reformation from destruction.

The mutual jealousies and animosities of those powerful rivals, each in heart opposed to gospel truth, rendered them willing at times to show temporary favour to those who embraced it, in furtherance of their own political ends, and, by involving them in continual struggles with each other and the Pope, who sometimes leaned to one, sometimes to the other, prevented them from using all their strength and energy against the doctrines they would willingly have crushed.

The province of Neufchâtel was not at that time one of the cantons of Switzerland, but an independent earldom under the sovereignty of the Countess Joan of Hochberg. But the husband of this lady, Louis of Orleans, Duc de Longueville, having taken part with France against Switzerland in 1512, the cantons had taken temporary possession of Neufchâtel. It was not restored to its rightful owner till 1529.

Neufchâtel therefore might have been supposed to have been rather French than German in its sympathies and interest ; but it was as an Ohrendorf, not as a Count of Vaudemont, that Raymond judged in political matters. At Worms he had been presented to the young Emperor, who had treated him with marked kindness and courtesy, and had thus, as Charles V. was so capable of doing, inspired him with an enthusiastic attachment for his person.

They had just reached the top of the ravine when the rain began to fall, and Madeline looked eagerly for the place where they had left Muriel and Guy. It was nowhere to be seen ! Above rose the steep, bare mountain-side ; to the left lay a mass of inaccessible rock ; to the right, at some distance, a dark pine-wood.

With a cry of dismay she looked up to Raymond. " We have mistaken the path," he said. " It must have been further to the left. Perhaps we might creep round the base of yonder rocks. It will be less fatiguing for thee than going down that rough path again, and the Beaume must be behind them."

It was a greater distance than they supposed ; and when at

last, with some danger and difficulty, Raymond had drawn Madeline across the narrow shelving rock that overhung the edge of the ravine, they found themselves apparently as far as ever from the object of their search,—brown rocky mountainsides and dark forests alone rose before them. The storm, too, had risen to a pitch of sudden fury unknown except in such mountain districts; and when Raymond raised his silver bugle and blew a long, loud blast, hoping Guy might hear and answer it, the crash of the thunder echoing from rock to rock, and the fury of the sudden gusts of wind, destroyed all hopes of thus discovering their way.

“We must descend the ravine again,—at any rate there will be more shelter there,” said Raymond. “My poor Madeline,” he continued, more tenderly than he had ever spoken to her, “how much my stupid carelessness is costing thee!”

“It is as much my fault as thine, Count Raymond,” she said. “But could we not try that path; it must lead into the same ravine,”—and she pointed out one still further on.

Raymond hesitated. “These hills are peculiar,” he said, “cleft into such a number of dells and chasms; it is so easy to mistake one for the other.”

“But oh! those slippery rocks! I cannot go back that way;” and she shuddered.

“Thou shalt not,” he said, yielding at once to the painful terror in her pleading eyes, and leading the way into the opening rather than path which she had indicated. For a time they proceeded without much difficulty, the thick growth of stunted pines sheltering them from the storm, and Raymond’s gentle and skilful help making the rough way easy to Madeline. But by degrees the path, which had insensibly been leading them in far too westerly a direction, grew more broken and uneven, and at last ceased entirely after a succession of rocky steps of enormous depth. At the foot of these they found a dense thicket of juniper and pines. To return was impossible, to descend seemed almost equally so to Madeline.

At last they reached the bottom of the tangled steep ; Madeline, in spite of Raymond's care, with torn garments and bruised limbs. They did not find themselves, as they had expected, in the ravine into which they had first descended, but in a narrow gully, through which the swollen stream rushed with torrent force ; at one end the water dashed violently down in a foaming fall over a huge rocky barrier, at the other its swift dark flood rushed out by a narrow passage in the rock. Egress by the former was impossible ; by the latter, only by the strip of earth that bordered the bed of the torrent.

Raymond looked anxiously round, and Madeline watched his perturbed face with gathering apprehension. All at once his brow cleared, and he said eagerly, " Yes, I am sure I am right ; this gully opens out within a league of the Priory of Motiers. Once, years ago, I had been seeking a vulture's nest in these mountains, and lost myself as now. And it was by that very pass I suddenly found myself in an inhabited valley close to Motiers. But then the torrent was low. Wilt thou wait here, Madeline, while I go down the gully a little way, and see if the stream has left it passable ?"

But Madeline clung to his arm ; all the terror of her position—*without him*—rose before her.

" No, no," she cried imploringly. " Oh, Count Raymond, do not leave me !"

" *Leave thee!*" he said ; " Madeline, I but thought to save thee what will perhaps be useless toil, and to return for thee if it be possible to reach the valley that way."

" I know. But thou mayst not be able to return ; and, if there be danger, I would rather share it."

A glad light shot from Raymond's eye, and he involuntarily pressed closer the little hand that rested on his arm. But he only said, " As thou wilt, then, dearest Madeline. But it must be at once."

The gorge narrowed very suddenly, and the waters entered the gully between two large masses of rock a few yards from

the spot where they stood. There was sufficient space to pass between them and the water without difficulty, and on each side of the stream some yards of rocky soil offered sufficient pathway. Still Raymond hesitated. "If I remember aright," he said, "the gully becomes exceedingly narrow further on. These mountain torrents rise so rapidly that it may be dangerous to venture through it. Yet there is no choice between doing so and remaining all night among the mountains. Thou art worn out already, my poor Madeline; but I think we must try it. If we find it growing narrower, and the water rising, we can return at once. There is, at least, no danger in the gorge."

The storm still raged with terrific violence; the stream evidently rose with tremendous rapidity; and the gully, which curved a little about a hundred yards from the entrance, grew so narrow beyond the bend that all trace of foot-path was already swallowed up.

"We must return, and quickly," Raymond said; and they began to retrace their steps with all speed, the diminished width of the border showing how much the flood had already risen. Scarcely had they done so, when a flash of blinding light pierced the depth even of that gloomy recess, and a mingled roar and crash succeeded it, so long and loud and terrific that Raymond instinctively clasped Madeline to his breast, folding his arms over her as if to shield her from the threatened danger. And until the last lingering echoes had died away, Madeline lay still with her face hidden there, as if paralyzed with terror. But when it ceased, and she felt those protecting arms relaxing their hold, while Raymond moved not, spoke not, she looked up with quick apprehension into his face. It was white as marble, and the dark eyes met hers with a mingled look of agony and horror. The words she would have spoken died away on her quivering lips; while Raymond strained her convulsively to his heart, murmuring, "My Madeline, my Madeline—this fate for thee, and I the cause!"

"O Raymond! what is it? wherefore lookst thou thus?"

"Look," he answered, pointing to the entrance of the gully.

Madeline's heart stood still as she did so. The lightning had struck the great rock that towered over it, and it had fallen across it in such a manner as to render escape in that direction impossible; while the narrow channel behind them was wholly filled by the red, angry waters. But with the sickening realization of the appalling danger in which they were placed came a quick throb of gladness that *one* did not meet it alone, and a pale smile shone over her face, as her soft eyes met the mingled tenderness and despair of Raymond's gaze.

"Thank God, it is not between us," she said.

"My Madeline, my noble Madeline!" Raymond exclaimed, "I must, I *will* save thee!"

But higher, fiercer, stronger rolled the mighty swelling torrent—already it swept to their very feet. Death was before, behind, around; the tremendous rapidity and strength of the waters rendered swimming out of the question; the perpendicular walls of the chasm afforded no footing for the most adventurous climber, and the mass of rock had fallen inwards in an oblique position.

Yet for one, at least, there was a thread of hope. Instantly Madeline grasped it. "Raymond," she said, "thou art strong and skilled in climbing. Thou mightst reach the top of that rock in safety."

"Not with thee, Madeline."

"No; *without* me. O Raymond, dear Raymond! leave me and save thyself. I must perish; but thou, Raymond, for Muriel's sake, for thy mother's, for *mine*, leave me—save thyself!" And she looked up with eager, imploring eyes, and sought to free herself from his clasping arms. "Go—go—O Raymond! it will be too late!"

"Madeline—Madeline! my love—my own!—what would my life be to me without *thee*?" he answered. "I will save thee, or die with thee!"

The water had risen to their feet. In the first shock of seeing the mouth of the gully closed, they had instinctively turned towards the other end, and then stood just at the curve. A few yards below, a large piece of rock rose in the stream, near the side on which they stood. "If we can reach that rock, Madeline," Raymond said, "we shall be comparatively safe; the water will scarcely cover it."

With difficulty they did so. It was unsteady, and tottered beneath their feet! For a few seconds they stood in silence, Raymond's strong arm supporting Madeline's exhausted frame, and her weary head resting upon his breast. She was conscious of nothing but of a vague sense of danger, blending strangely with utter content; her mind seemed confused, and the power of thought borne away by the bewildering rush of the swift, steady waters. There was a dim, sweet consciousness of the presence of One stronger than those mighty waters,—around, embracing both, as Raymond's arm embraced her; but her head grew giddy, her brain reeled, she closed her eyes, and rested heavier on the breast that sustained her.

Then Raymond whispered, "The water has loosened the stone, Madeline. Cling to me, dearest, cling close and fast. I cannot save thee, but God may, even yet!"

He pressed a long, long kiss upon her cold cheek. She felt his arms close tighter round her; then there was a shock, a plunge, a moment's agonized battling with cold suffocating waters, still with that resolute clasp around her—then darkness and oblivion!

CHAPTER XXXII.

WAKING FROM A DREAM.

' Whose hand but thine, my Father,
Could guide me through the desert?
I have praised thee for the morning,
Let me praise thee for the night.
Though all hath changed around me,
Thou art the same for ever ;
And though my way is lonely,
I know that it is right."—ANNA SHIPTON.



WHEN Madeline awoke from what appeared to her a long, deep sleep, filled with strange dreams and nightmare fancies, she found herself lying on a low pallet in a small narrow room, with a gentle-faced woman in the habit of a nun seated beside her. A dim light came in through the high grated window, against which the dark boughs of a pine-tree rose and fell with a heavy swaying sound, softening with their shadow the outlines of a coarse picture of the Madonna that hung opposite, and giving it a mournful, pathetic beauty. The walls were bare, the floor of stone, the bed on which she lay and the little stool on which the nun sat the only furniture.

At her first movement the nun bent over her. "Thou art better, my daughter," she said ; "the blessed saints have heard our prayers. Drink this, and go to sleep again."

Madeline's head was strangely heavy as she strove to lift it from the pillow, and a cry of pain escaped her as she tried to raise herself—each limb seemed bruised and powerless, and

she sank back, wearily closing her eyes and endeavouring to collect her scattered senses. A vague impression that something had happened, something at once terrible and pleasant, a great danger and a mighty joy, rested dreamily upon her. But the nun began to sing a Latin hymn, in a low, soft, monotonous voice; and with a sense, half restful, half uneasy, of being borne away—away as by swift rushing water—she fell into a quiet sleep, from which she awoke refreshed and calm.

The nun was kneeling before a crucifix engaged in her devotions, and Madeline lay still, thinking what had brought her there. She had been ill, but from what? Were those looks and tones, with which her very heart's core was thrilling, which shone out, like stars through a cloudy night sky, amidst the mists which enveloped her mind, real or imaginary? Were those images of mountain solitudes, and raging storms, and fierce rushing waters, the phantasies of a fevered brain, or were they real—were they true?

At last the nun rose and met Madeline's eager eyes. "Oh, kind sister!" she cried, "tell me, where am I? what has brought me hither?"

"Calm thee, my child," said the latter, regarding Madeline's agitated face with a look half pitying, half wondering; "thou hast been ill, and this excitement is bad for thee. Thou art at the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy at Motiers; and truly it was Our Lady's mercy that brought thee here."

"Then it was no dream—that fearful crash, those cold rushing waters?"

"It was not, daughter."

"*Then the rest was no dream!*" Madeline murmured, disregarding the nun's little homily upon the blessedness of receiving so signal a mark of "Our Lady's" protection and favour; in the midst of which she exclaimed, "But *he*, is *he* safe, is *he* unhurt?"

The nun stopped short, but her kindly woman's heart could but answer to Madeline's beseeching eyes, "If thou meanest

the Count Raymond von Ohrendorf, he shared Our Lady's mercy with thee; he is safe and unhurt, save perhaps a few bruises."

"O God, I thank *thee*!—I thank *thee*!" Madeline murmured, the tears starting to her eyes. "Thou hast saved us! thou hast saved *him*!—thou!—thou only!"

The nun looked grave. "Knowest thou not, my daughter," she said, "that all this valley is in Our Lady's special protection. If the great God saved thee, it was through her. How couldst thou think he would otherwise stoop to a poor foolish child like thee?"

"Ah," said Madeline, "who so ready as a *father* to save a helpless child struggling with a rushing torrent? And God is that to us—in Jesus, the dear Lord who died for us, whose presence was with us, round us, in that fearful hour."

"Thou speakest boldly, child," the nun replied, a perplexed, wondering look, coming into her dull, quiet eyes.

Just then the door of the cell opened noiselessly, and Muriel came in. With a cry of glad surprise, Madeline stretched out her arms, and the friends clasped each other in a warm embrace. With many charges to Madeline not to exert or tire herself, the nun withdrew and left them together.

"I thought not to find you here, Muriel," Madeline said; "but how long have I been ill?"

"Three days, dearest. And thou thoughtst I could leave thee, Madeline? That was not kind of thee; and yet—"

"Ah! forgive me, Muriel; but my mind is so confused. Tell me how it was. I shall not rest till I hear all."

Then Muriel told her how they had waited long for her and Raymond to return, till the clouds began to gather so darkly round that Guy grew fearful for her, and insisted on setting out with a view to reach shelter at the Convent of Motiers before the storm should break, leaving two of the attendants behind to wait for the truants. The road was difficult and circuitous, Muriel's mule fell lame, and they reached the convent drenched

to the skin, and apprehensive as to the non-appearance of Raymond and Madeline, by whom they had quite expected to be overtaken.

Giving Muriel into the charge of the sisters, Guy was going in the direction of the village where they had left their horses in the morning, when he distinctly recognized the blast of Raymond's silver bugle, borne on the wind that swept down from the mountains. The sound came apparently from the slopes above the valley, some distance from the road, and Guy at once blew an answering peal, and hastened in the direction whence the sound came. Again and again he heard the bugle call, the peculiar note used for summoning help; and bidding one of his servants follow him, he dashed down through the convent meadows, at the bottom of which flowed the stream whose graceful curves and silvery sparkles they had admired as they passed in the morning, then swollen to a tremendous torrent, and crossing a stone bridge under the walls of the priory, made their way towards an opening in the hills, from which the stream issued, and from which the sound of the bugle came.

But before they reached it Raymond had appeared with Madeline's senseless form in his arms. He had caught the overhanging branches of a tree, after having been swept down by the torrent to the place where the gully suddenly widened out, and had succeeded, after a long and desperate effort, in effecting a safe landing. Fortunately, the part of the stream down which they had been borne was free from rocks, and they had escaped serious injury. Madeline was insensible from the shock, but apparently otherwise unhurt; but Raymond's arm had been severely sprained in withstanding the force of the current, as he clung by it to the tree.

With the help of Guy, Madeline was conveyed to the convent, where every care and kindness had been shown her by the good sisters; but the shock, following such extreme fatigue and terror, had been too much for her; and when at length she opened her eyes, it was in the unconsciousness of fever.

Raymond was still suffering much pain from his sprained arm, Muriel said, in reply to Madeline's inquiries ; and then calmly and quietly, with no apparent emotion, she spoke of his intended departure. Madeline marvelled a little at this strange composure ; but she was very weak, and her brain was still incapable of sustaining settled thought, when, three days afterwards, a summons from Lady Ermengarde took Muriel away. A litter had also been sent for Madeline, but Sister Geneviève pronounced her patient quite unfit to be removed for some days at least.

And then it seemed as if Madeline had suddenly reached a fresh stage of convalescence ; her mind all at once grew clear, and, as if from a beautiful dream, she awoke. Till then she had lain in a sweet calm of dreamy rest and content, through which a subtle electric thrill of inexpressible joy vibrated incessantly. But as the past, the present, the future grew clear to her, a feeling of dismay, of consternation, grew upon her. Well she knew now whence came the charm that had made those summer days so bright ; and she felt like one who had been drifting to siren music down a swiftly-flowing enchanted stream, over whose sparkling, limpid waters, blue skies arched tenderly, and by whose green shores graceful boughs and fair flowers waved—heedless that it ended in a wide, gray, shoreless ocean, over which leaden skies lowered and cold mists hovered, where the music, and the sunshine, and the magic charm could never come, save as mournful memories.

Raymond loved her ; but with the exquisite, irrepressible joy of that knowledge keen pain was blended. What could she, the simple burgher maiden, be to the heir of two baronies, in whose veins ran the proud blood of the De Coucis and the Ohrendorfs, before whom a bright career of fame was opening. He loved her, and he was noble, and pure, and true ; no thought of dishonour or falsehood could be attached to him. Yet she knew his love for her could bring to him but disappointment and pain ; hers for him, to her but a weary, life-long aching, robbing her youth of its bloom, her after-years of their fruitage.

Scales seemed to have fallen from her eyes ; she understood now only too plainly some things that had perplexed her of late. She had fancied at times that the Lady Ermengarde was changed in her manner to her ; sometimes her heart had been pained by something that seemed very like coldness or even haughtiness ; but at others she had treated her with almost more caressing fondness than of old, as if, Madeline felt, she were conscious of having wronged or misjudged her. And she had said so much of the wrong and folly of misplaced affection, dwelling, Madeline thought, almost harshly upon the grief and pain her own dear mother had brought upon herself and others, by weakly allowing hers to rest upon one so much above her in rank and station. It was unlike the gentle, placid Lady Ermengarde to speak and act thus. But now Madeline understood it all—the occasional coldness, the implied censure, the frequent confidences on the subject of the projected betrothal of Raymond and the beautiful high-born lady, Juliette de Vergy ; and her cheek burned with bitter pain and shame as she thought that perhaps the quick eye of a mother's jealous affection had penetrated not only Raymond's secret, but her own.

Poor Madeline ! it is no wonder the skill of the good nuns was in measure baffled, and that though in a few days she could creep feebly out into the sunny convent-garden, or, as best suited her mood, seek the dim shade and quiet of the old gray cloisters, her strength returned but slowly. They were very kind, those simple women. None of them were very young. Sister Geneviève, who nursed Madeline so tenderly, was the youngest, and it was twelve years since she had been beyond the convent walls. She was a contrast in every way to the only nun with whom Madeline had previously been brought into close contact. Of a gentle, timid disposition, the castle in which her father and rough wild brothers lived, and the daily contact with coarse passions and boisterous revelry, had been alike distasteful to her, and the mother-love that might have come between her and them had early passed from her life.

Thus the convent walls had been to her, not as a barrier between natural affections and pleasures, but as a shield from a world in which she had found little to attract, much to repel.

The prioress was a gracious, dignified woman, of simple piety, and much beloved by the nuns. Of noble birth, and brought up almost from infancy in the cloister, she had no thought or interest beyond it. To her, as to Sister Geneviève—and, indeed, as far as Madeline could perceive, to the rest of the nuns—the convent was as a sheltered isle in the midst of a wild, stormy sea, whose dark troubled waters tossed hither and thither the frail life-barks on it at its own wild will, or rather at the bidding of its ruler, Satan—as an oasis of cool shade in the fiery glow of a desert barren of all that was most holy, and beautiful, and true. Of the mighty struggle then going on they knew nothing; listening, while Madeline spoke of it, like frightened, wondering children, crossing their breasts, muttering many a prayer, or rather many a charm, against the mysterious spell of heresy.

But Madeline's mind was too sadly preoccupied to take very much interest in those around her. The very stillness and monotony increased the fever of her heart. And there seemed to her something pitiful in the emptiness of the lives of those simple, child-like women. It is true they were sheltered from the storms of life, one of which was tearing her own heart just then; but when she saw gray-haired women go into raptures over the opening of a flower in the convent-garden, or chafe and fret at the failure of a new conserve, she could better understand Sister Elizabeth's mournful acknowledgment, that hers had been a "wasted life,"—a life with all the sunshine and storms of God's ordering shut out, and in their stead one even, dim, gray shadow of man's making introduced—a life *without* the bonds of family love and the ties of social intercourse, which have been almost all glorified as types of his dealings and relationships with his blood-bought family; yet *with* all the little-nesses, and the weaknesses, and the jealousies of frail human

hearts, stunted and withered for want of healthy development in their natural atmosphere. Yet a life, doubtless, in which many a lamp burned brightly if under a bushel, in which many a soul found a way to tread in His footsteps, and passed at last to the Father's house above—to the home of which the earthly ones may be faint shadows and types, a home *with* the love, but *without* the sin.

Sometimes Madeline spoke to Sister Geneviève of the love of God, and of the fulness of his salvation. She listened half fearfully, half incredulously. "It is so different," she said. "Ah, my child, it must be hard to keep right in such a wild, evil world, where the devil works his will! I am only too thankful to be under the shelter of Our Lady's roof, where one cannot go astray."

"The Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd; he goes before his own wherever they may have to journey, and he will keep them from the evil," Madeline answered.

"But the world is full of sorrow as well as evil, my daughter; young as thou art, I think thou hast learned that. 'There is some strife within thee even now. 'The prioress's electuary is not wont to fail. Would that we might keep thee here, thy life would be so calm and peaceful!'"

"I would have my life be what my Father makes it; not choose it for myself," Madeline answered.

But when Sister Geneviève had left her, she recalled her words, and asked herself, was she indeed willing to accept the life that lay before her? For clearer and clearer she saw that that life must be lived without Raymond. It might be that the words and tones that had been to her such thrilling music might have meant less than she had supposed; it might be that Raymond would never have uttered them but under the influence of danger and excitement; it might be that her clinging helplessness and trust had moved him to a passing tenderness. And even if he indeed loved her, could she requite the kindness of Lady Ermengarde, the sisterly affection of Muriel, by disap-

pointing their hopes and misusing their confidence! No! it could not, must not be!

Sometimes she thought it would be better to remain at the convent till he should have left Vaudemont; then, after Muriel's betrothal, she would return to her dear home at Zurich; and their paths might never cross again. At others, she felt as if she must know the truth—as if her very heart would die away within her, in its wild, deep yearnings to see that beloved face once more, ere it passed from her life for ever.

The conflict was sharp and sore; and at last, wearied and exhausted—as a child worn out with vain struggling with a passion that will not be conquered, yields at last to its mother's loving call, and flings itself into her outstretched arms—Madeleine sank upon the breast of Him whose tender voice had been well-nigh drowned in the tempest of her heart's anguish, and cried, "Lord, thou knowest, and thou carest! Thou knowest how sparkling is the cup I must dash aside; thou carest that my life has suddenly grown dark. And thou wilt forgive the blindness and the weakness that have brought this anguish on me. Thou wilt not chide me for my love, for thou art love. And thou knowest I have no strength, no wisdom, no power. Lord, I can fight no more. I will be still and passive in thy hands. Do for me and with me as thou wilt. Only hold thou mine hand, and be with me through the gloom."

Then she grew calm. Though the waves of doubt, and pain, and perplexity might toss her frail bark, her anchor was down, and the tossing but strengthened its hold, and bedded it deeper in its sure and steadfast resting-place within the veil.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A BARRIER, BUT NOT OF ROCK.

"For *us* to love!
Oh! is't not taking Sorrow to our hearts,
Binding her there?"—MRS. HEMANS.



THE matter of Madeline's return to Vaudemont before Raymond's departure seemed to be quite taken out of her own hands. Sister Geneviève having pronounced her sufficiently recovered to bear the journey, a litter was at once sent to convey her thither; and the arrangements for her comfort had been made with so much thoughtful care that she could not refuse to avail herself of them.

Lady Ermengarde received her rather coldly at first, but when she looked into her pale agitated face and downcast eyes, her heart softened, and after embracing her tenderly she said, "Thou hast suffered much, my poor child, and I will not chide thee, though thou didst somewhat forget thy usual maidenly bearing. Nay, nay," she continued, as the blood rushed with a painful glow to Madeline's very brow, "I would not distress thee—thou art a good child. I doubt thee not, Madeline; I doubt thee not. Remember that." But the eager, querulous tones, belied the words; and while the lady lavished every tenderness and care upon her, Madeline felt her heart die away within her.

And Raymond? He did not come to greet her, though he

was still at Vaudemont, she knew. And after a time Lady Ermengarde took occasion to tell her that he had gone to the Castle of Vallangin, where the Lady Juliette de Vergy was then visiting her aunt, the Countess Guillemette. Poor Madeline was glad of the plea her illness afforded to retire at once and lay her throbbing head upon her pillow in the gloom and stillness of her own room. Muriel assisted her kindly and gently, but in a dreamy, abstracted manner, as if preoccupied with painful thoughts.

"They despise me," she murmured, when she was at last alone with her doubt and her pain; "Lady Ermengarde and Muriel—my Muriel. And *he* avoids me! I see it all. Oh! blind, blind and foolish! To think that *he* could love me—the simple burgher maiden. Yet he called me his love, his own! and he is noble, he is true!" The torrent sounds rose mournfully from the gorge, seeming then to wail a requiem over the wrecked hopes of another life—her own, and bringing back with painful distinctness the words and tones which had drowned for her the terrible rush of those other torrent-waters—words and tones that had raised a barrier for ever between her and her free, happy girlhood, and shut her in, it seemed to her then, to a dreary, blighted womanhood.

The daylight had faded, when the tapestry was pushed aside and Lady Ermengarde entered, bearing a silver lamp in her hand, the light from which revealed a strangely troubled expression on her fair, plump, placid face. She placed the lamp on a table, and sitting down by Madeline's couch, laid her hand gently upon her burning brow.

There was a short, uneasy silence, then with evident effort Lady Ermengarde spoke. In broken, inconsistent, half-coherent sentences, she sometimes reproached Madeline, sometimes pleaded with her, sometimes pitied her and blamed herself. Tender words and tears were mingled with words that stung Madeline to the quick. That she had long watched Raymond's growing affection for her she confessed, but with her usual

vacillation and procrastination she had never spoken of it to him, and had sought to persuade herself it only existed in her fancy. But after that memorable day in the mountain gorge Raymond had told her all. Pride of race and kindness of heart had struggled for the mastery, and the first had won. Raymond was her idol, her hope, her pride, and she had set her heart upon his wedding the beautiful Lady Juliette. She owned Raymond would never win a gentler or sweeter bride, whatever her degree, than Madeline would have been; but that he, her boy, a De Couci and a Von Ohrendorf, should marry the daughter of a burgher—and what she deprecated still more, the grandchild of the poor wandering pedlar who lay in his lowly grave in the village churchyard—was a thing not to be thought of. And she finished with an appeal to Madeline not to blight the fair promise of Raymond's life, and entered into details of the advantages that must accrue to him through the union with the Lady Juliette, to which his fancy for Madeline was the only obstacle.

Madeline listened quietly to it all, and when at length Lady Ermengarde paused, she said, in a low, steady voice,—“Lady Ermengarde, I have always sought to remember my true position here. I have remembered it. I do remember it. I shall always remember it. I have been blind, perhaps, but not presumptuous. And the words the Count Raymond spoke that day when we stood together on the threshold of eternity can have no meaning now, for me or for him. Doubtless he too sees this.”

“He does not, Madeline. He sees what is truth,—how good, and sweet, and gentle thou art; how worthy in thyself! Madeline,” she said earnestly, “thou dost not love him!—oh, tell me thou dost not love him! Surely I have not brought such a trial upon thee, my poor Marguerite's gentle child.” She spoke pleadingly, tenderly, remorsefully.

Madeline's spirit was roused, and she answered proudly,—“Lady Ermengarde, I will bring no disappointment or disgrace

to you or your house. The Count Raymond has ever been most kind and gentle to me ; twice has he been my deliverer, —first from terror and annoyance, perhaps worse,—and now from a terrible death. My heart is not stone or wood. Such things must leave their traces ; and as a flower may love the sun, so do I, the simple burgher maiden, never forgetting the infinity of space between us, esteem, reverence, *love* the noble Count Raymond von Ohrendorf. Have I said enough ?” she continued, pressing her hands to her throbbing brow. “Are you satisfied, lady ?”

Lady Ermengarde answered by tears and caresses, excuses and regrets ; but she was satisfied, and at last, to Madeline's great relief, left her alone. Then Madeline turned her face from the light, moaning, “Yet thou lovest me. O Raymond, *my* Raymond that might be !—*mine* !”

Meanwhile Lady Ermengarde was saying to Muriel,—“Poor child, doubtless she thought me cold, and cruel, and proud ; but thou knowest, Muriel, it must never be. All the country knows her mother's origin. Raymond will forget ; and her heart is not deeply touched, if indeed it be touched at all. We must be very tender to her, Muriel, thou and I. But I would that Raymond had not insisted on meeting her ere he left.”

But Raymond had done so. He had spoken words, he said, which she could not fail to understand, and until he knew how much those words were worth to her, he would not leave Vaudemont. And Lady Ermengarde, in reluctantly consenting, had taken care to contrive that he should be out of the way when Madeline arrived, so that she might forestall their meeting by a private conference with her.

There are some people to whom it is difficult to believe in anything contrary to their wishes until its reality is actually forced upon them, and easy to believe in anything which they very earnestly desire. Lady Ermengarde was one of these. Though she had long been displeased with Raymond's devotion to Madeline, and uncertain whether to be angry with, or

relieved by, Madeline's simple, happy, and apparently unconscious reception of it, the idea of an attachment growing up between them was too painful to be seriously entertained, until Raymond frankly acknowledged that he loved Madeline ; and she had, for the most part, succeeded in putting it from her. And now, because she wished it so earnestly, because it was so intensely painful to think of causing sorrow and suffering to the gentle girl she really loved, she persuaded herself that Madeline did not really love Raymond,—only, as she said, loved and esteemed and revered him, as her deliverer and noble friend, from a wise and becoming distance. So she told Raymond.

And when they first met, the next day, and in Lady Ermengarde's presence, Madeline's calm, quiet manner, and the apparent composure with which her thanks to Raymond for rescuing her life at the risk of his own were spoken, fully confirmed this welcome belief. But Raymond felt the trembling of the cold hand he grasped so closely, he saw shadows on the meek brow and pale sweet face that were not the traces of mere bodily pain ; and when once some sudden word lifted the drooping lids from the soft eyes that never before refused to meet his with the happy, loving trust of a confiding child, and they met the pleading, questioning gaze of his own for a moment, he marked the gentle lips quiver and the fair cheek flush and pale. Before the tenderness of that gaze they fell quickly, yet not before he had read in them the answer he sought.

But in vain he tried to gain speech with her. She established herself in what was indeed her usual place, an ottoman at Lady Ermengarde's feet, and when not there sought refuge in her own room, under plea of the illness which was evidently only too real. Circumstances seemed in every way to favour her avoidance of him. Thus three days passed wearily, how wearily for Madeline no one knew, no one even guessed, unless, indeed, Raymond, and on the fourth he was to leave Vaudemont. 'There had been visitors in the castle, and in his

father's absence he had been obliged to play the host ; but the last day they had all left except two young knights, who were to accompany him on the morrow. Leaving them in the tennis-court, Raymond entered the castle, resolved on seeking Muriel and entreating her to bring Madeline to him. But as he passed along the narrow vaulted passage leading to his mother's apartment he met Madeline face to face.

She would have passed on, but Raymond seized both her hands. "Madeline," he exclaimed, "I cannot part with thee thus. At least I have a right to know wherefore thou dost thus avoid me,—me to whom thou art dearer than life itself. Madeline, my beloved, why is it ?"

The sudden, overpowering agitation, was too much for Madeline's enfeebled frame ; a faintness seized her, and she would have fallen had not Raymond supported her to a seat in the deep embrasure of a window near. "Is my love so terrible to thee ?" he said with reproachful tenderness ; "or," and his brow darkened, "has some one been trifling with thy gentle heart ?"

"O Count Raymond," Madeline murmured, as she felt the strength with which she had steeled herself melting to utter weakness, "ask me not. Let me go."

"Let thee go !" he said, instantly releasing the hands he had held. "Madeline, dost thou fear me ? That day in the gorge—"

"Count Raymond," she interrupted, "that day must be as though it never had been, and the words spoken then as though they never had been spoken. Only one memory of it must live,—that a noble knight saved the poor life of a lowly burgher maiden at the risk of his own."

"And in saving that saved the most precious thing earth holds for him. Madeline, that day I thought thou didst prefer to share danger, and even death itself, with me to life without me ! 'Thank God, it is not between us,' thou saidst when thou first sawest the rocky barrier that seemed to shut us in to a terrible doom."

"But a barrier is between us now, Count Raymond, therefore I may not listen to such words from thee."

"And that barrier?"

"One so high and broad, thou canst not fail to see it."

"I know," he answered; "thou meanest the difference of rank. My mother has talked with thee. My Madeline, what of that? I will own but one barrier, Madeline," and again he took her hands in his; "if thou canst lift thine eyes to mine and tell me thou lovest me not, that thou couldst never love me, I will acknowledge one. No other shall ever part us. *But thou canst not!*"

She could not, and therefore had to listen to the oft-told tale, old as humanity, everlasting as the hills, changeless as the ocean. Through those weary nights and days she had been schooling herself for this, and she had thought herself prepared for the part she must act; but with Raymond's hands clasping hers, his eyes upon her face, his deep tones of thrilling tenderness in her ear, her heart leaped up and answered. Yet answered but as a doomed captive's might to the music that sounded his death-march—to the glad sunshine that lighted him to his grave.

"Thou art right, Raymond," she said, at last raising her soft eyes to his; "I cannot say I do not love thee. Since I first knew thee thou hast been to me the embodiment of all that is noble, and generous, and true. And as such I may love thee still—ever, always. I shall hear of thee, and watch thy bright career of nobleness and fame; and, better still, I shall hear thee spoken of as the friend of liberty and truth, the defender of the helpless and oppressed. I know it. And my love and my prayers will ever be thine. But thou, thou must forget me, or remember me only as the lowly woodland flower that cast a passing fragrance on thy path—that path on the heights so far above me. And when thou findest one to share it, worthy of thee and of thy race, God will teach me to rejoice in thy happiness. But we must part now; these words to thee must be as

though they had never been spoken. But not so to me ; the memory of thy noble, generous love, shall go with me to my grave. It will be joy enough to know that thou didst once love me ! ”

And all Raymond's tender pleadings, and passionate entreaties, and indignant protests, were in vain. In vain he declared his father's anger would evaporate after a brief, though doubtless stormy, resistance ; that his mother's love for himself was too deep and unselfish to stand long between him and his heart's dearest wish, and that her love for Madeline was such as she could feel for no stranger daughter. Love was stronger in her than pride, he said, though she knew it not. And to Muriel no sister could be so dear as Madeline. In vain, too—though this shook her most—he urged the pain it would be to him, the deep shadow it would cast over his life, if she refused to accept his love—the love that was hers whether she would or not.

“ It would be treachery, Raymond,” she said, “ after all thy mother's goodness to me. She and thy father might forgive, but they could not, would not, approve. And what am I, that my loss should leave thy life blank ? ” A question that Raymond answered fully.

At last he said, sadly and reluctantly, “ It must be as thou wilt, Madeline. Now, at least, I can urge thee no more. But I will be true to our unspoken troth-plight ; and so, I well believe, wilt thou.” Then, as steps and voices were heard approaching, he held both her hands closely to his heart, and looking down into the soft, mournful eyes, that no longer shrank from his, he said, “ My Madeline, I will never forget thee—never ! As long as this heart beats it will be thine, thine only ! ” and hurriedly pressing his lips on her hands ere he released them, he turned away in answer to the impatient summons of the young knight Albert of Steinthal, who was advancing along the passage.

This was their true farewell, though hands and eyes met

again for a moment in formal leave-taking. Slipping, unperceived, from the group of friends and dependants who gathered in the castle-hall to watch their young lord depart, Madeline hurried up the turret-stair and gained the spot on the battlements where she had stood the fair May morning on which Raymond had first been identified with her deliverer of Basle, and watched the little cavalcade wind down the slopes, with eyes that took in but one figure, till it disappeared in the pine forest. Then the world seemed suddenly to have grown cold and dark, in spite of the bright September sunshine, and she let her head droop till her brow rested on the cold stone, while her heart sank in grief that was too deep for tears.

Looking up at last, she saw Muriel was beside her. In after-days she remembered the rigid, stony look upon her face, as she stood with her intense gaze fixed on the point of road where the travellers had been finally lost to view; but then she only marked the sudden change that came upon it when she turned and looked into hers. "My Madeline, my poor Madeline," was all she said, as she drew her down beside her on the stone seat in the wall, and folded her closely to her breast. But the tone more than the words told Madeline that Muriel understood and sympathized, and her anguish melted into tears.

"Then thou dost love him, Madeline?" Muriel said at last.

"How could I do otherwise," she answered, "and he so noble, so gentle? O Muriel! I never meant it! I never dreamt that this could be. I only felt his presence like sweetest music, and brightest sunshine, and deepest joy. I asked not, thought not, why it was so. And how should I have imagined that *he* could love *me*?"

"But he does love thee, Madeline."

"Yes," she answered, a soft light shining through her tears; "but, O Muriel, what can love between us mean but bitter pain and separation?"

"Ah! Madeline, they who pluck the rose of earthly love will ever be wounded by the cruel thorns that surround it."

"There are no thorns round thine, Muriel," she said sadly.

"None! no thorns! Madeline, Madeline, little thou knowest!" For a moment Muriel's face was hidden in her hands, when she continued rapidly, as if to prevent question or remark, "But, Madeline, Raymond has told me all; he trusts thee, though thou, in thy noble self-forgetfulness, wouldst give him no pledge, no promise. He will be true to thee, Madeline; his love is no light passing fancy, but deep and faithful as his own noble heart."

"But, O Muriel, I can never be aught to him. An impassable barrier divides us. The Lady Ermengarde—the Baron."

"Madeline, I know all. And I tell thee thou wilt be to my mother what I might have been. And—to my father—and Raymond. But to *him*"—Muriel's voice had become low and broken; she broke off suddenly, and for a moment seemed to forget Madeline's presence. "But, Madeline, O Madeline," she continued, after a time, in deep low tones, taking Madeline's hands, and fixing her dark, mournful eyes on hers, with a gaze that seemed to read her very soul, "in thy clear eyes I read sorrow indeed, and pain amidst their yearning love, but no doubt, no perplexity."

A quick flush mounted to Madeline's brow. "I *cannot* doubt him," she said, "he is so tender and so true. Hope may be wild and vain, but I cannot quench it."

"It was not that I meant," she said. "Madeline, tell me, is it but man, but earthly rank and customs that come between thee and thy love, or does He too, the Crucified, bid thee renounce it for his sake?"

"Renounce it, Muriel! It is his precious gift, even as the pain with which it is blent is his loving discipline. These earthly affections, deep and strong as they are, are but dim, feeble mirrors, set in our souls, by which we may learn a little what he is; given us to lead us to him, to make us understand him, not to come between our souls and him."

"Then it is well," Muriel answered. "Thou wilt be happy

yet. God bless thee, my *sister* Madeline!" She pressed a long kiss upon Madeline's lips, held her a moment silently to her heart, then turned away, and left her bewildered with mingled grief and joy and perplexity. Grief for the absence of Raymond, and for the greater obstacles than time and place that severed their lives, if not their hearts; joy in the consciousness of his generous love; perplexity as to Muriel's incoherent words and anguished manner—perplexity that deepened into distress as, one by one, things, little noted at the time, came back to her. She saw now how the golden haze with which Raymond's presence had surrounded her own life had blinded her to Muriel's gradual return to the old depression and unrest. Raymond's uneasy forebodings, uttered by the cascade in the gorge that memorable day, temporarily effaced by the things that succeeded them, returned to her mind. And now he was gone from her and from Muriel!

Sadly she felt that gradually, imperceptibly the old free confidence and sympathy between herself and Muriel had died away, only waking in brief occasional flashes. Was it all her fault? Had she been so wholly preoccupied in mind that Muriel had turned away chilled and repelled? And what would be the end? That sadly mistaken idea, that all human affections, and ties, and duties were incompatible with true devotion to God, whither would it lead?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A VACANT PLACE.

"Yet, yet sustain me, Hollest !—I am vowed
To solemn service high;
And shall the spirit, for thy tasks endowed,
Sink on the threshold of the sanctuary,
Fainting beneath the burden of the day,
Because no human tone
Unto the altar-stone
Of that pure spousal fame inviolate,
Where it should make eternal truth its mate,
May cheer the sacred, solitary way?"



WEEK had worn wearily away. Each day Madeline's solicitude for Muriel increased. On her return from the Convent of Motiers she had been startled to perceive how very worn and fragile Muriel looked. The always delicate cheek had lost its roundness and bloom, and deep violet shadows rested heavily under the beautiful eyes, over which the long lashes usually drooped mournfully, until they rested on the colourless cheek; and once or twice she had seen her gaze following Guy, unperceived, with an intensity of agonized affection, as though some near and terrible separation threatened them. Even in his presence she had been pensive and thoughtful, and was doubly so in his absence. He had left Vaudemont before Raymond, and his return was not looked for for some days.

But one morning a messenger arrived with a letter from him for Muriel, which she took to her chamber to read. It was very long ere she returned,—so long, that Lady Ermengarde grew

uneasy, and despatched Madeline to seek her, fearing the letter contained ill news. Receiving no reply to her repeated calls, Madeline softly entered the room. Muriel was seated in a great carved chair, her face rigid and colourless as marble, her hands crossed upon her breast, and her beautiful dark eyes fixed on the large crucifix that hung beneath the portrait of the Madonna. The open letter lay at her feet; and there was an inexplicable something in her whole mien and attitude that sent a cold thrill of terror through Madeline's heart. Her entrance did not attract Muriel's attention, but at her voice, filled with apprehension and distress, she slowly turned her head and looked up into her face. Madeline never forgot that look, in which love and anguish blended strangely, almost fearfully, with high resolve and fervent enthusiasm.

"Muriel, Muriel! what has chanced? What has moved thee thus?" she cried.

There was a triumphant light in Muriel's eyes as she answered, "The last throes of a hard-fought battle, Madeline, of a battle won. Yes, won! At last! at last! Victory to-day. Triumph to-morrow. Afterwards rest, peace!"

"O Muriel, what meanest thou?"

"Madeline," she answered, with a sudden change of look and voice, "if thou lovest me, ask me not. If thou carest for my soul's peace and salvation, leave me to-day unquestioned, unhindered. To-morrow thou wilt know all." And as Madeline paused, terrified, distressed, irresolute, she continued, "Tell my mother Guy de Montmédi will be here to-morrow. Tell her all is well—yes, *well*! And leave me; I would be alone. It may be the last kindness I shall ask of thee, Madeline."

Madeline still stood with clasped hands and imploring face; when Muriel rose, and gliding quickly past her, left the room. Whither she went, Madeline knew not. With a sick and sinking heart she slowly retraced her steps to the apartment of the Lady Ermengarde. The lady was busily engaged in the inspection of one of her maiden's embroidery-frames; and when

Madeline stole up behind her chair, and, the better to conceal the trembling of her voice, whispered the tidings of Guy's return, she did not turn and notice the tell-tale paleness and agitation of her face.

That evening Muriel was silent and abstracted, and there was a burning flush upon her cheek, and a strange wild light in her eye, which Lady Ermengarde attributed to joy at the prospect of Guy's unexpected return, but which Madeline watched with painful, if vague apprehension.

The morrow came, the dreaded morrow, and then Madeline indeed knew all. From troubled, uneasy slumber, she woke in the dim gray of the early morning. Was it a dream, or had Muriel stolen noiselessly in, in the midnight stillness, and, bending over her as she slept, pressed a long, long kiss upon her brow, with lips of icy coldness? She had started up with outstretched arms, and called her name; but darkness and silence were around her, and she had supposed her waking thoughts had haunted her sleeping fancies.

It was before her usual hour of rising, but there was a vague oppression of dread upon her spirit, and she hastily dressed, and, after seeking the strength and guidance she felt she would specially need, passed into Muriel's chamber, strongly purposing to cast aside the shrinking timidity that was natural to her, and, in the boldness of faithful affection, plead with Muriel to confide in her as of old.

Muriel's room was empty. The silver lamp gleamed faintly in the growing daylight; the rich dress she had worn the previous day lay upon the floor; and the large and beautiful pearls of the chaplet that had bound her hair were scattered upon the floor, as though broken by a hasty or impatient hand. A weight of stillness, in which Madeline could plainly discern the loud beatings of her own heart, pervaded the chamber. And the bed had not been used that night.

A terrible thought darted like cold steel through Madeline's breast, and for a few moments she stood as if paralyzed by that

terrible fear. Then her eye caught her own name traced in tremulous characters on a folded paper that lay on the table near her. With trembling hands she opened it. In Muriel's fair handwriting were written the following words :—

“ Madeline, my friend, my sister, to thee I address the last farewell I dare not write to all. Ere thine eyes read these lines, the long wandering sheep will be safe in the blessed fold of the Church.

“ Yes, at last I obey the voice of love, of authority, of terror, whose awful, solemn tones, have pursued me daily, hourly, in spite of my guilty efforts to drown them. At last I renounce all love but that of the heart that was pierced for me on the bitter cross, and broken for my sins ; at last I obey the command, ‘ Follow Me,’ and leave all for His sake who left heaven itself for mine ; at last I fly from the solemn warnings of wrath and judgment that await me and mine if, for their dear sakes, I continue to shrink from the sacrifice which alone separates me from all the blessedness the Church offers to those who seek it exclusively in her holy ordinances. At last !

“ And there is mercy for the penitent, the erring, subdued and sanctified at last—more rest, peace, joy. These will come to me, tempest-tossed so long ; already they are dawning on my soul ; and when grace shall have done its purifying work, my sacrifice and my prayers will draw down blessings on those upon whom I am bringing such anguish now, upon whom my continuance in the world would bring worse—the curse of a despised and rejected Saviour.

“ I know it would be wholly vain to seek their free consent ; to spare torture to myself and them, I take this step. Oh, bid them not condemn me ! bid them remember who has said,—‘ He that loveth father, mother, brother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.’ Oh, plead with them for pardon, for pity—no ; why should *I* ask pity,—*I*, called to tread in His steps, to follow Him, the Good Shepherd, who, thou hast so often said, Madeline, leads ever the right way ? The right way, if the

dark way—the rough way. Such was His, ending in the cruel cross.

“I may not pause to think, such dark, wild thoughts arise. Madeline, Madeline, plead for me! Thou canst tell all, and I cannot trust my heart to write. Thou wilt be to my father and my mother a loving, tender daughter, and to Raymond all he looks to thee to be. God and the blessed saints bless and keep thee!

“But there is one to whom thou canst be nought, upon whose face I dared not trust myself to look again. Bid him forget me. Soon it will be sin to think of him, as it has ever been sin in me to love him. Yet he loves Him for whose sake I have torn my heart-strings from their passionate ivy-clasp round his. Bid him yield me to Him, and tell him—be still, unconquered heart, be still! leave him to time and to God.

“Madeline, farewell! farewell till we meet purified from the dross of these earthly affections, where, perhaps, we may love without sin. Through thee farewell, father, mother, brother,—and thou who, more than all beside, hast come between my soul and God!

“We hold the last request of the dying sacred, and faithfully adhere to the injunctions of the dead. That she may be spared the fruitless anguish of vain entreaties to return to the life from which she will have passed for ever ere this paper is read, is the last request of Muriel von Ohrendorf.”

The letter dropped from Madeline's hands, and for some moments she sat motionless; not stunned, but with every faculty sharpened to keener comprehension, every feeling intensified. Then, not from the pale, quivering lips, but from the depths of her heart, went up the cry, “Oh, my God! *Father!* Is this indeed thy will,—this tearing asunder of heart-strings, this rending of the natural ties thou thyself hast made so strong? It is not, it cannot be. Thou hast said, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother.’ Thou, Lord Jesus, wert subject to thine; and thou hast made wedded human love the type of thine own. Thou

biddest us follow thee ; but thy steps were in the common ways of daily life, in the streets as well as in the Temple, at the social board as well as on the lonely mountain-side, in the homes of Nazareth and Bethany as well as in the gloomy wilderness and the sorrowful garden. Thou trodest the path thy Father marked out for thee ; thou madest not thine own cross ; thou choosedst not thine own cup. Thou didst love with a special human love some of those who trod thine earthly way with thee. Thou didst plead with thy Father to keep thine own that were in the world from the evil, not to take them out of the world,—that poor, dark, guilty world which thou didst love and die to save, in which thou hast bid those who know and love thee shine as lights, beacon-lights guiding to thee. Thou shuttest thyself up in no walled enclosure ; thou wentest about doing good—thy Father's business—in the streets, on the sea-shore, in busy marts, and on the quiet hill-sides, wherever human need, and sorrow, and suffering were to be found. No fence of formal sanctity surrounded thee ; thou wert in the very midst of life's busy tide. Lord, this is not thy will ; I know it, I feel it. Thou wilt be worshipped in spirit and in truth ; and thou art as near in an earthly home as in a convent cell,—perhaps nearer, for one is thine ordinance, the other man's.

“ But ah ! gentle, loving Shepherd, if this poor sheep of thine have indeed mistaken a hireling's voice for thine, and if she find herself still lost in a dreary desert place, with none near to comfort or to help,—oh, then, do thou thyself draw near ; lift her to thy shoulder ; let her hear thy voice so close that she cannot mistake it ! Though she may never more have earthly home, bear her safely to the Father's house above.

“ And oh ! thou that didst bear our griefs and carry our sorrows below,—thou that art touched with the feeling of them above, comfort the hearts and the home and the one young opening life, which this day will leave so cruelly desolate !”

And with a thought of those loving hearts, and that stricken home, and that young blighted life, came a burst of bitter tears

Of the dismay, the grief, the anguish that filled the castle when Muriel's flight was known,—of Lady Ermengarde's tears and lamentations, of Guy's deep silent anguish, words can tell but little. No traces of the fugitives—for Agnes too was missing—could be discovered. It was supposed they had stolen out in the depth of the night by means of a postern door, from which a steep and almost inaccessible path led down the side of the gorge nearest the slopes. A courier was at once despatched to Ohrendorf, bearing the tidings to the Baron, and messengers sent to the various convents near. The Baron was furious; but anger was vain. Even when her retreat was discovered, Muriel steadily refused to hold any communication with her friends. She was of age, and the Baron had to content himself with declaring her dowry should never go to enrich the revenues of arrogant churchmen, lazy monks, and useless nuns. The Lady Ermengarde sank prostrate under the cruel blow; a low fever set in, and for many weary weeks Madeline watched beside her, ministering to her needs with all a daughter's tenderness, patiently bearing with all her unjust reproaches and querulous self-upbraidings, and gently seeking to lead her bruised heart to the only Source of healing and comfort.

Guy de Montmédi bore his sorrow manfully; no reproaches, no vain regrets, passed his lips. From the first he had felt Muriel was wholly, hopelessly lost to him, and with her all that made life precious. But the blow came to him as the accolade of knighthood, marking him out, by a mighty sorrow and a mighty wrong, as a champion in the cause of liberty and truth. Hitherto he had maintained his reverence for the old time-honoured traditions of the faith of his fathers, and believed that nothing but the preaching of the long-suppressed gospel was necessary to restore the majestic edifice of the Church to perfect symmetry and beauty. But, touched to the very quick of his heart's dearest affections, he doubted, he questioned; he looked for God, and he found but man. Closing the classic pages that had hitherto engrossed him, he turned to the Word

of God ; not, alas ! as to a fountain of living water,—powerful to heal bruised hearts and sin-sick souls,—but only as to an armoury, from whence he might draw weapons for the fight. And there he found no warrant for Rome's arrogant assumption, no traces of her priesthood, her monachism, her absolving power. Thenceforth he became one of her bitterest opponents.

He did not remain long at Vaudemont ; the scenes in which he had won the love whose loss made life a blank to him, were imbittered by too many painful memories. One purpose alone remained to him,—to promote the cause of truth by attacking and waging relentless war against the false pretensions of the Church that had robbed him of his bride. He came to Vaudemont a generous, high-hearted, enthusiastic youth ; he left it a grave and saddened and imbittered man.

Very dreary were the months that followed Muriel's flight to Madeline, when the gray sky shut in the distant mountain-peaks, and the wintry wind howled mournfully round the old castle walls, and the hollow roar of the swollen torrent boomed dirge-like from the gorge. Sometimes it seemed as if all were some hideous dream, from which she would wake up and find Muriel once more beside her. Tidings came from Raymond ; but she had entreated him not to write to or even make special mention of her. Therefore she only heard of his indignant sorrow at Muriel's conduct through Lady Ermengarde ; but well she knew how keen and deep would be his pain, how bitter would be his disappointment. At first Lady Ermengarde rarely mentioned him to her, but by degrees her reticence wore off, and it seemed to Madeline as if she had wholly forgotten what had passed between them.

And at this she rejoiced. Deep down in her heart glowed the sweet consciousness of Raymond's love ; and even while she told herself that that love was hopeless,—that he would, he must learn to forget her, and love one more worthy of his race and name,—that consciousness, with all its mingling of pain

and unutterable yearning, was a secret fountain of exquisite happiness, a bright jewel of inestimable worth. But *would* he forget her? Was not his love, like himself, generous and noble and true, like her own—part of his very being? She could not doubt him; to do so seemed a cruel wrong. And the future was in a Father's hands. If their lives must flow on to the end in separate channels, they would be of his ordering, and they would meet at last. He who knew all, knew best. There was no need, she felt, for her to cast from her the precious gem of which her heart was the casket. But she gave the key into her Father's hand. That great love and great grief had come to her unknown, unsought, in the path along which that hand had led her. And the knowledge that he knew, he cared, he overruled, was enough to carry her through many a dark and trying hour.

Instinctively her heart turned to the dear home at Zurich; but she could not leave the forsaken, broken-hearted mother, to whom she was bound by a triple bond—her own affection, and the sakes of Raymond and Muriel.

And Muriel, Muriel!—round whose name gathered the sadness and silence of the grave—what of her? Had she indeed found the rest and peace she sought; had the wild throbbings of her heart been stilled; had the convent walls shut out conflict and turmoil from her life? Ah! too sadly, too surely Madeline's heart answered No! Rest, peace, she knew, were to be found in Christ alone, and Muriel sought them in the traditions of men; her heart was as God made it, with subtle chords vibrating to every touch of human feeling and weakness, such as death's icy dart alone could wholly still. And gates and bars shut not out sin and Satan.

But Madeline knew that the Good Shepherd goes after the wandering sheep "until he find it;" and though the distant convent in which Muriel had taken refuge was one of whose opposition to the doctrines of the gospel she was too well assured, she knew he would follow her there. Blind as she had

been to the true meaning of his call, sadly as she had mistaken his voice, little as she had understood the human sympathy and tenderness that blend harmoniously with the divine fulness of his wonderful love, it was *his* call, *his* voice, *his* love for the sake of which she had sacrificed herself and others. The stories of self-immolation and ascetic stoicism that had been the sacred literature of her childhood, had first kindled the spark that after-influences fanned into a flame. The natural bent of her mind—imaginative, morbid, enthusiastic—had rendered her peculiarly susceptible of religious emotions, and Agnes had, as we have seen, well known how to work upon a nature so adapted to her purpose. Before she heard the sweet message of the gospel, she had learned to regard all the affections and interests of human life as incompatible with true devotion to a God who demanded an entire surrender of the heart from those to whom the grace of his special call had been given. And in the fervid emulation aroused in her soul by the holy heroism and spotless sanctity of the martyrs and saints, she thought she recognized that in herself. Thus began the struggle in her heart, that rose to agony when the love which God himself has sanctioned as supreme over all other earthly affections took possession of it.

On the soil thus impregnated with superstition and morbid religiousness the good seed of the kingdom fell, and sprang up, it appeared, to vigorous life. But as the colour of a flower or the flavour of a fruit is sometimes changed by the properties of the soil in which the plant that produced it grows, so was it with the fruit of that seed in Muriel's heart. She saw not, as so many pious but unenlightened souls have seen, the rites and customs of a ceremonial and theology invented by man through the spiritualizing medium of a ray of divine light, but that light itself was coloured and obscured by the scales of superstition and error that covered her eyes. At times, indeed, it had seemed as if that light would be victorious. Stealing in through some sudden rift, it poured into her soul, and for a brief space

all would be clear to her. But again the shadows would gather, again her gaze would be turned inward, and the force of old habits of thought swept her onward to the end.

God does indeed demand the entire, unconditional, absolute surrender of heart and life from those whom he calls to himself. And that full surrender is the secret of all true Christian walk and victory over sin. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." "Yield yourselves unto God," "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," are the solemn requirements of his Word.

And many he has indeed called to leave all for his sake,—to burst the strongest ties, to tear asunder the very heart-strings. But not without a purpose, not for the sake of the pain it gave. No ; in the common details of every life there is room to tread in the Saviour's footprints,—our human affections and earthly interests are the alphabet by which he teaches us the language of heaven. Well he knows the needed discipline for each beloved, blood-bought child. Displeasing must it be to him to see the good gifts of temporal mercies which he gives them richly to enjoy regarded as stones, as serpents, as scorpions. He would have us all drink the cup as he mingles it, the bitter and the sweet together. He would have us see him in everything, not only in the assembly and the closet, but in the home, in all that makes the sum of our earthly life, in the small things as well as the great.

And he would have us see also everything in him ; not only the unsearchable riches of grace and love that are ours in Christ, but also the things of time and sense : the deep, strong, human love (which, indeed, for the believer, is not a thing of time), in exchange for which royal treasures might be "utterly contemned ;" the little pleasures, and little cares, and little kindnesses that make up the tale of daily life ; the brightness and beauty of the material creation, home, friends, time, talents, pleasures, sorrows, everything. Him in everything, everything in him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A SURE FOUNDATION.

' Is God for me ? I fear not, though all against me rise ,
When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flies.
My friend the Lord Almighty, and he who loves me, God !
What enemy shall harm me, though coming as a flood ? "

PAUL GERHARDT.



WE were last at Zurich on the day of Kaspar Nordeck's confession, September 1521 ; we return to it two years later. Let us give a passing glance over the events affecting the Reformation that have taken place there and elsewhere in that period. In the autumn of 1521, Leo X. having at length taken part with the Emperor Charles V., hundreds of Swiss were enrolled under the banners of France, ostensibly to oppose the Pope, really to further the ambitious views of Francis I. In vain Zwingle thundered denunciations from the pulpit ; 2700 Zurichers marched into Italy,—among them, in spite of the sorrow and displeasure of his friends, Max Reinhardt.

In April 1522 was fought the memorable battle of the Bicocque, in which whole companies of the Swiss were mown down by the artillery of the Imperial General Pescara, and which greatly contributed to destroy the taste of the Swiss for the foreign service against which Zwingle so resolutely set his face, thereby incurring increased opposition and animosity.

In the early part of the same year, Zwingle, having laid the foundations of "repentance from dead works and faith toward

God," began to attack the hollow and idolatrous ceremonial of Rome. "The fall of your ceremonies is at hand," he wrote about this time; "act so at least that they may fall with decency, and that in every place light may be quickly substituted for darkness."

In July he convened a council at Einsiedeln, once the seat of abject superstition. The standard of the gospel was unfurled, and zealous confessors of the truth came from all parts of Switzerland. The object of the conference was to protest against human authority in the things of God, and in particular against the enforced celibacy of priests. Addresses drawn up by Zwingle, and signed by eleven evangelical preachers, were sent to the cantons and to the Bishop of Constance. These addresses, printed and widely diffused, caused great agitation: open persecution began in Friburg; Oswald Myconius, the friend of Zwingle, was banished from Lucerne; even in Zurich some of the extreme and violent partisans of reform were forbidden to speak on controverted points; while the Diet, assembled at Baden, incited by the Bishop of Constance, forbade priests or laymen to speak against the established faith, and actually seized and imprisoned an evangelist named Urban Weiss for preaching the gospel.

But God makes even the wrath of man to praise him; the blast of persecution ever serves to fan the feeble flame of living faith into a steady blaze. Dangers and difficulties threatened the infant Reformation; dark clouds lowered over the heads of the faithful men who had set to their seal that God was true. But God was overhead; the work was his. They had counted the cost, and they quailed not.

To his persecuted and discouraged friend, Oswald Myconius, Zwingle wrote at this time: "Had I not perceived the Lord guiding the ship, I should, long ere now, have cast the helm into the sea; but I see him amidst the tempest, strengthening the tackling, arranging the yards, stretching the sails—what do I say? commanding the very winds.....I confide entirely to his

sovereign goodness. Let him govern, transport, hasten, retard, precipitate, arrest, break down ; let him even plunge us to the bottom of the abyss, we fear nothing. We are vessels belonging to him. He can use us as he pleases, for honour or disgrace."

To his brothers, who, alarmed at the report of Ulric's heresies and dangers, which had reached the heights of the Tocken-burg, had written to beseech him to consider the dangers of his course, and the shame that would be cast on the family if he were burned or put to death as a proscribed heretic, he replied : "There is no danger, no misfortune, which I have not long carefully weighed. My own strength is mere nothingness, and I know the power of my enemies ; but I also know that I can do everything through Christ strengthening me.....Oh ! dearly beloved brethren ! the gospel derives from the blood of Christ this wondrous nature, that the most violent persecutions, far from arresting, only hasten its progress. Those only are true soldiers of Christ who fear not to bear in their body the wounds of their Master. All my labours have no other end than to make men know the treasures of happiness Christ has acquired for us, in order that all may flee to the Father through the death of his Son. If his doctrine offends you, your anger cannot stop me."

And, tempted by his brethren, forsaken by some friends, hindered by others, surrounded by enemies, threatened with open persecution and secret assassination, he wrote : "O Jesus ! thou seest how wicked men and blasphemers stun the ears of thy people with their cries. Thou knowest from my infancy I have hated disputes, and yet in spite of myself thou hast not ceased to urge me on to the combat.....Wherefore I confidently call upon thee, as thou hast begun, so to finish. If in anything I have built up improperly, beat it down with thy mighty hand. If I have laid some other foundation beside thine, let thy powerful hand overthrow it. O most beloved Vine, of which we are the branches, of which the Father is the vine-dresser,

forsake not thy offspring. For thou hast promised to be with us even to the end of the world."

Against such sentiments, what could the wrath of man avail?

About this time Ulric Zwingle was privately married to Anna Reinhardt, the mother of Gerold von Knonau. How one so fearless and full of faith adopted a course so little in accordance with his decided and upright character, it is hard to say, but it is certain that while the marriage was only openly proclaimed in 1524, various letters and documents prove it to have taken place about July 1522. The virtues and noble character of Anna Reinhardt, strengthened by the discipline of early trial and sorrow, made her a fitting helpmeet for him whose preaching had brought her to Christ, and in whose hopes and aspirations she was so well adapted to sympathize.

After a public discussion at Zurich in January 1523, outward reform was commenced in that city. Zwingle had published sixty-seven theses, of which the key-note was: "The only way of salvation to all men who have been, are, or are to be, is Jesus Christ." A large proportion of the members of the Great Council were enlightened and pious men, zealous for the gospel. Thus the reform which in Wittenberg, in Luther's absence, was accomplished with all the violence and indecency of a popular tumult, was at Zurich legally performed in the presence of members of the council. The images were removed in an orderly manner from the churches, their dresses and ornaments used for the relief of the poor, and the relics honourably buried. For the Latin vespers and masses a daily exposition of a chapter of the Bible from the original text was substituted.

It is true there were some exceptions to this rule. The church of St. Peter's was stripped by night of its idols and ornaments prior to the decree of the council; but the vicar who had incited the people to the act was imprisoned. Claud Hottinger, "a worthy man, and well read in the Scriptures," was shocked at witnessing the peasants that came in and out of the city worshipping a crucifix that stood near one of the gates at Stadel-



The precious fruit of his captivity in the Wartburg—
the German Bible.

hofen. Accompanied by some citizens, he threw it down. He was banished for two years. His zeal again outstripping his prudence, this time in words, he was seized and brought before the Diet of Lucerne. Adhering to his faith, he was sentenced to be beheaded. On learning his sentence, he gave thanks to Jesus Christ, and prayed God to forgive his enemies. He put away a crucifix a monk put to his lips, saying, "It is with the heart we receive Christ." Surrounded by a weeping crowd he was led to execution. "Weep not ; I am going to eternal happiness," he said ; and calmly committing his soul into the hands of his Redeemer, he laid his head upon the block.

In Germany truth progressed with rapid strides. Luther finally returned to Wittenberg in March 1522. And the precious fruit of his captivity in the Wartburg—the German Bible—was scattered broadcast throughout the land. Read in castle halls and by cottage hearth-fires, by the student at his desk and by the labourer on his way to the field, by women and even children, it was penetrating the ice-crust of centuries, everywhere bringing forth the budding promise of a spiritual spring. In vain, by order of the pope and bishops, were sacrilegious piles erected ; the fountain had been opened whence flowed the sweet waters that had power to quench the sore thirst of weary human hearts. God had opened it, man could not close it. And at length, finding it vain to attempt to crush down the people's desire for the Word of God, the Romish theologians published a translation of the Scriptures, professedly their own, really Luther's with a few alterations, and made no objection to its being read.

The splendid but oppressive pontificate of the æsthetic and luxurious Leo X. had suddenly come to a close. In the prime of life he had been called to his last account ; and the people over whom he had reigned and tyrannized gave him cries of joy for his requiem. "Thou didst creep in like a fox, rule like a lion, die like a dog !" they said.

In his place had been elected Adrian of Utrecht, a Nether-

lander, once a professor of Louvain, afterwards tutor to Charles V., and made by his influence Cardinal of Tortosa, and Governor of Castile. He was of a wholly different character from his predecessor. Grave, laborious, pious, upright, and benevolent, affecting no greater state in the Vatican than at Louvain, he owned to "abominable things in sacred matters, spiritual abuses round the holy chair, prerogative strained, abuses everywhere," and set himself to the much-needed work of reform. But versed in scholastic theology, and blindly zealous for the Church, the worthy and venerable Adrian was a more formidable opponent of the gospel than the profligate and careless Leo. Soon after his accession he wrote a threatening letter to the Elector Frederic, menacing him with the "sword of the empire and the popedom;" and despatched his legate Chiergaté to Germany with a brief, authorizing him to demand the death of Luther. "It is necessary," he said, "to amputate this gangrened limb from the body."

Violent persecutions broke out in Austria, Ducal Saxony, Wurtemberg, and Brunswick, and especially in the Netherlands. As in the early days of the Church, "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." The Word of God and the works of Luther had penetrated monasteries and convents, many of which had become centres of evangelical light and truth; and, what most excited the rage of the Romish party, many monks, enlightened by Scripture, left the useless idleness of the cloister, and assumed secular dress and employments.

Yet, while the power of the hierarchy and monachism seemed tottering to its fall, there was preparing, first on a bed of suffering in the ancient Spanish castle of Loyola, then in the hermit-caves in the rugged mountains of Montserrat, and afterwards in the cell of the Dominican convent at Manresa, an instrument destined to raise both to even greater, if more limited, ascendancy. The bullet that struck down the young and gallant knight, Inigo Lopez di Recalde, on the wall of Pampeluna, did more for Rome than all the pens of theologians, the bulls of

popes, and the might of kings ; for it led to the foundation of that remarkable Order which, by gaining the ear and conscience of princes in the confessional, swayed the sceptre of kingdoms.

Ulrich von Hütten was dead. Proscribed by Pope and Emperor, feared by his friends for his violence, at once hated and dreaded by his enemies, the death of his friend and protector, Franz von Sickingen, amidst the ruins of his castle of Landstuhl, battered down by the cannon of the Elector of Hesse and the Count Palatine, had driven Hütten forth a sick, helpless fugitive, to seek a new refuge. Worn out with physical disease, and wearied of mental conflict, he came to Basle, thinking to find it with Erasmus. But the prince of letters turned coldly from one with whom, in spite of his very opposite character, he had maintained a sort of friendship. He had no wish to be associated with his disgrace, or mixed up with his affairs. Stung to the quick, the poet-knight at once left Basle.

Driven from town to town, he at last came to Zurich, where Zwingle received him with kindness and the respect due to his talents. "Is this your terrible Hütten," he wrote ; "that conqueror ? he who behaves with such sweetness to little children, such kindness to the humblest men ? How can we believe a tongue so amiable has raised so great a tempest ?"

The poor, broken life, was not allowed to ebb peacefully away at Zurich. He was compelled to quit the city, and died a few months afterwards at Uffnau, a little island in the Lake of Zurich, whither Zwingle had sent him, to be under the care of Pastor John Schnepf, who was skilled in the healing art. But the brief, troubled course of that brilliant, stormy life was run. He died in August 1523, at the early age of thirty-five, leaving but one earthly possession behind him—a pen ! He, the relentless enemy and satirist of the monks, was indebted to their charity for a grave ! He was buried in land belonging to the convent of Einsiedeln.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MARTYRS OF BRUSSELS.

“No, their ashes will not die;
Abroad their holy dust will fly,
And, scattered o'er earth's furthest strand,
Raise up for God a warlike band.
Satan, by taking life away,
May keep them silent for a day;
But death has from him victory wrung,
And Christ in every clime is sung.”—LUTHER.



ONE evening late in October 1523, the Reinhardt family was gathered in the large house-room. The father sat in his great chair at the head of the table, which was prepared for the evening meal. The two years that had passed had left heavy traces on his bowed and shrunken figure, and blanched his few remaining locks. He now seldom left his chair by the stove, except to creep feebly out into the sun, leaning on the slight arm of his little Clare. The management of the business had, during the absence of Max, entirely devolved upon Friedel, who, recognizing in the call of duty the voice of his beloved Master, had cheerfully resigned his cherished dream of a professor's chair, and devoted himself to the task of supplying his father's place, soon, it was too evident, to be altogether empty.

Max had returned a few months previously, after his family had endured the pain of protracted suspense as to his fate. He had been severely wounded and taken prisoner at Bicocque, but had at last succeeded in making his escape and reaching

Switzerland in safety. He returned disenchanted as to the prospects of furthering the cause of gospel truth by fighting under the alien banner of the ambitious French monarch, but with his restless spirit still unchastened and unsubdued, eagerly advocating immediate and armed resistance against the Papal pretensions.

Paul still lay on his couch in the corner. To his patient, suffering life, little outward change had come; and to him it seemed as if he were still like one lying in the cool shade, with folded hands looking on at the busy harvest-field. He knew not how many a perplexed soul, how many a burdened, drooping heart, had been sent by him to their places in that busy field; to how many his gentle words of lowly because of heavenly wisdom, and the silent influence of his chastened spirit, had been the savour of life unto life. Like Moses, he knew not that his face shone. Little did he dream how often the mighty heart of the man upon whose courage and constancy the fate of gospel truth in Switzerland depended under God, wearied and crushed with the burden that lay upon it, had received new hope, new strength, new courage from the burning love and glowing faith of the crippled sufferer, who, in his weakness and pain, was daily drinking in more and more of his Master's spirit, learning more and more that "salvation is of the Lord."

Bertha flitted in and out of the room, directing an awkward maiden in the arrangement of the table. Her grave, pale face, was softer and gentler in expression than of old. Gradually, imperceptibly, faith and trust were taking the place of unbelief and despondency in the heart so long enclosed in bitterness. To her the truth of the gospel came not with the power and glory of a summer sunrise, but rather with the slow, lingering course of a dim, gray, wintry dawn. At last it was day in her soul—but the day of a clouded winter morn. Day, for the light of truth was there, and the windows of her soul were unbarred to behold it; but not sunshine, for the presence and

love of Jesus shone but faintly upon it—through the thick mists that still lingered between.

Clare was little changed ; still the same gentle child, with the deep, loving eyes, and delicate, spiritual-looking face. She was tenderly soothing her father's querulous impatience at the delay of Max and Friedel.

Beside Paul's couch sat Madeline. She looked older ; and though her old sweet smile came and went as she talked gaily with Paul, there was a shade of pensiveness on the gentle face, and something in the quiet depths of the soft eyes, that told of life-lessons learned in shadow rather than sunshine during the two years that had passed since that bright summer at Vaudemont.

Presently Max and Friedel entered, and with them a young man about thirty, a stranger, whom Friedel introduced as Nicholas Dort, a fugitive from the Low Countries for the sake of the gospel. But Herr Reinhardt scarcely paused to give the customary words of welcome, before he asked eagerly, "What news of the council ? What has it done to-day ?"

"Talked as usual," Max replied ; "but when it came to acting, drew back. Out upon such timid spirits !"

"Nay, brother," said Friedel ; "craven fear had certainly no part in its decision."

"We want courage, not womanish tears," Max answered.

"True courage consists not in rashness," said the stranger ; "and the Word of God bids us bear with the infirmities of the weak. Have patience ; great things have been done. An edifice overthrown by the sudden force of a tempest may be raised again upon the old foundations, but when the foundations are first undermined the building must fall—and fall for ever."

"But to admit monstrous abuses, and not at once, with bold, free hand, sweep them from their place, is surely a weakness at which our enemies may well sneer."

But the father impatiently demanded an account of what had passed in the Great Council convened that day in the Town-

house, to decide upon the doctrine of the Mass, and not a debate upon it. And Friedel told how, out of three hundred and fifty priests present, not one had been found to defend—from Scripture, the only standard admitted in that assembly—the pretended “sacrifice” of the mass;—how the calm, clear words of Zwingle, had carried conviction with them, yet how gently and firmly he had resisted the impatient ardour of those who by immediate and violent measures would have shocked the prejudices of many, and perhaps stumbled timid, feeble souls;—how the venerable Commander Schmidt of Kussnacht had advised the teaching of men to “receive Christ into their hearts,” rather than the occupying of their minds with sudden innovations;—how at the close Zwingle had risen, and with a voice choked with emotion, said, “Gracious lords, God is with us.....In the name of God,.....forward!” and then, overcome with solemn joy, wept in company with many others. How certain it was that truth had that day won a mighty victory in Zurich.

When the evening meal was over, and they gathered round the stove, the conversation turned upon the spread of the truth in Germany, whence Nicholas Dort had recently come; and particularly on the marvellous results produced by the dissemination of the Scriptures among all classes of the people, and in the convents, specially in those of the Augustines.

“Ah,” said Friedel, “I heard some story about the great Augustinian convent at Antwerp having been shut up on account of the monks having received the gospel.”

“Received it, and preached it, and sealed it with their blood,” Nicholas answered in a low, deep voice. “Heard you not of the stake that blazed in the market-place of Brussels last July? of the two young monks of Antwerp who, counting not their lives dear unto themselves, went calmly to their doom singing praises in the midst of the flames?—preaching by their martyr-deaths with a power before which the burning words of living lips grow cold!”

"We heard it," Paul answered.

"But *I saw* it," Nicholas rejoined. A shudder passed over his frame, and he covered his face with his hand, while deep silence fell upon the listening group.

But in a few moments he looked up, and though his face was pale and his lips quivered, a triumphant light shone through the tears that gleamed in his eye as he said: "This is no way to speak of that glorious triumph of faith. But truly the flesh is weak, and it is an awful thing to see a living man in the midst of devouring flames,—and that man your heart's dearest friend and brother; and yet a glorious thing! a thing for which I thank God!"

He paused, and Paul said softly: "Yet theirs was a blessed lot—a brief conflict with fiery pangs, then the Master's 'Well done,' and the martyr's crown. But should there not have been three? Was there not one whose faith failed before the ordeal of bonds and death?"

"Alas, poor Lambert! Yes. Ah, my friends, and he the most learned, the most eloquent, the most zealous! the one whose burning words had been as a fire in our midst. But would you care to hear the story of that Augustinian convent at Antwerp to which belongs the glory of giving new martyrs to the faith of Christ? Ere this probably not one stone of it is left upon another; but the living stones of Christ's temple are in his keeping. As in the first persecution, they have been 'scattered abroad,' and are now going 'everywhere preaching the word;' while to some the heavens have opened as their rejoicing spirits were borne thitherward in chariots of fire. Faithful unto death, they have received a crown of life. May grace be given to us who are left to tread in their steps!"

Again a silence fell, and then Paul said: "We would hear thy story, brother; if I mistake not, thou canst tell it well. Having, in thy blindness, gone out of the world for Christ's sake, thou hast been driven into it again for his sake, and his gospel's. Thou wert in that convent?"

"I was. But I entered it not for Christ's sake. One of a large family, I had been destined for the Church from my infancy ; my mother's brother being prior of the great Augustinian monastery, there was more prospect of advancement for me there than in the world, I being sickly and of a studious disposition. I entered it in 1516. There was then little light among the brethren, though we had some men well skilled in the doctrines of the fathers of the Church. But soon after, some friars, who had resided at Wittenberg, came thither, and brought with them the seeds of gospel truth. They propounded new, strange doctrines, and bade us 'search the Scriptures,' to see if these things were so. We did so, and the light spread. My uncle, James Probst, the prior, was one of the first to receive the truth, and as early as 1519 preached salvation through Christ alone. The church was too small for the overflowing crowds that pressed into it to hear the words of grace and free salvation. Among ourselves, a great work was done ; there were few of the friars who did not gladly receive the so-called new doctrines, which they found were yet so much older than the old ones.

"Soon after I entered the monastery I was seized with a long and dangerous illness, during which my first convictions of sin and need of something more than mere outward forms seized me. These convictions were deepened and strengthened by the words of a young monk, who, though only a few years older than myself, had been some years in the convent. He was generally esteemed in the monastery for his piety, meekness, and self-denial ; but from the first my heart had been knit to him with the warmest affection, and the tenderness and devotion with which he nursed me through my long and trying sickness deepened and strengthened it. He had once possessed considerable talent as a painter ; and one of the finest paintings in the convent, placed on the high altar, was his work, executed immediately before he took the vows. But his genius seemed to have forsaken him from the time he entered the convent ;

and though some of his after-works hung upon the walls, he had long ceased to cultivate it. Gentle, patient, holy as he was, a deep depression had settled upon his spirit : his fine features were wasted and worn with vigils and fasting ; his eyes, which were remarkably beautiful, were expressive only of the deepest melancholy. Fitted by his talents to take the highest place, he ever sought the lowest, and seemed to find no consolation so great as being allowed to perform the most menial offices. Regarded almost as a saint by his brother friars, his cry, from the depths of a sorely burdened heart, was ever, 'God be merciful to me a sinner !' An overpowering sense of the awful holiness of God, of the entire surrender and consecration of heart he demanded, and of the incorrigible sinfulness of his own heart, weighed upon him like an intolerable burden, and often brought him to the very verge of despair. These feelings, under his influence, were echoed feebly in my heart ; and I began, as he had already done for six weary years, to seek salvation in my own poor works, with the natural result,—increasing distress, increasing darkness, anguish, and despair.

"Then the friars brought from Wittemberg the doctrine of justification by faith. They were men well versed in the writings of the great founder of our order, and in the precious words of Scripture. To both of us their words were the power of God unto salvation,—to Heinrich first. The very brightness of the light dazzled and overpowered me, but with him it was different. Right from the heart of the God before whom he had quailed and trembled so long it came into his. Every fear vanished, every doubt was dispelled, every burden was removed. I looked around and saw 'men as trees walking,' and it needed many a touch of the blessed Light-giver's hands before I saw clearly. But *he* looked up at once, and met eyes in which he read a fulness of grace and tenderness and love which met his every need, and was satisfied.

"And then I learned that the secret sin he had so bitterly bewailed was his inability to banish from his heart the image

of one whom he had loved with all the fervour of his deep, tender heart. Believing this love to be the idol in the temple which kept God out of it, he had wrestled and striven, and deemed each remembrance of the beloved face and voice as a temptation from the evil one. And in the noble constancy of that strong affection for one whom six years before he had voluntarily renounced in heroic obedience to what he believed to be a divine call, he saw but an absence of saving grace, a carnal love that to him was deadly sin. But from the moment in which he saw a Father's face, where he had looked for the awful countenance of a terrible Judge, all this was changed. The poor, bruised, bleeding heart ceased its strivings after the stoicism that is so wholly inconsistent with the teachings of a God of love, revealed in the word of his grace.

"Of his past life he spoke but that once. His whole object seemed to be to communicate to other hearts the glad tidings that had brought such peace to his own. He had not the burning eloquence of my uncle the friar; but men hung upon the gentle thrilling words that fell from his lips, as he told of the wondrous love wherewith God had loved a poor, perishing, guilty world. The first to receive the glad tidings, he was the first to proclaim them, the first to seal them with his blood. His brief, fruitful ministry, ended in the fagot-pile at Brussels."

The speaker paused, overcome with emotion. Bertha's knitting had long fallen from her hands, but her face was in shadow, and absorbed in the interest of the stranger's story, no one noticed her almost uncontrollable agitation.

Paul broke the silence by saying, "'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' How much more blessed are they that die *for* the Lord, who are slain for the word of God, and for the testimony that they held! Words are forgotten, but the voice of martyr-blood will echo throughout the ages!"

"Thou art right," Nicholas replied. "The preaching of Heinrich Vohes and Johann Esch was only heard by hundreds; from their death-pyre a voice has rung out to all the millions of Christendom. And, in spite of persecution, the gospel has since flourished in Antwerp. I have perhaps turned from the story of the work of God in our convent, to dwell upon the life and death of my heart's chosen brother and companion in the gospel. But you will pardon me this. In the end of the year 1521, my uncle, James Probst, was arrested and carried to Brussels; also Melchior Mirisch. Alas! my fiery, impetuous uncle, relying, like Peter, upon his own strength, fell. Before the judges his faith failed—he recanted. But, like Peter, he repented and was forgiven. He withdrew his recantation, escaped to Bruges, and preached the gospel he had denied. He was again taken, carried to Brussels, and sentenced to death. Again he escaped, as if by miracle. A Franciscan monk whose heart God had touched aided his escape. He was at Wittemberg when I last heard of him.

"These things did not intimidate the brethren of our convent. Several of them still faithfully preached the gospel to ever increasing audiences. But in October of last year the long-gathering tempest broke suddenly upon us. The convent was shut up, the friars, with few exceptions, were imprisoned and condemned to death. By command of the emperor's aunt, the Regent Margaret, the sacred vessels and the Holy Sacrament were removed from our monastery as from a polluted place, the building was barricaded, and orders given that it should be razed to the ground. Whether this decree has been carried out, I know not.

"Some of the monks of the convent in which we were confined were favourable to the gospel, and winked at our flight. With me escaped my friend Heinrich, Lambert Thorn, who had filled my uncle's place as preacher, and Johann Esch. We separated, Heinrich intending to make his way to Switzerland; I remained in hiding till my hair and beard had grown, then, trust-



Before the inquisitors.

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ing to the change wrought in my appearance, went to Brussels. I arrived there in time to witness the martyrdom of my friends. At last the rigorous search of the Inquisition had been crowned with success. Captured and brought before the inquisitors, they had steadily refused to recant, and had declared themselves ready to die for the truth. Lambert alone had failed. With him the fear of death had prevailed ; with Heinrich and Johann the love of God in Christ.

“On the 1st July, the day after my arrival, they were brought forth to die. Even the inquisitors wept, and they were led to the market-place amidst the tears and groans of the sorrowing people. They alone were calm, and walked steadily to their doom singing psalms, and constantly expressing their willingness to die for Christ. Ere they were bound, I pressed forward, and grasping Heinrich’s hands, sought to say farewell ; but words would not come.

“‘My brother,’ Heinrich said, as calmly as if he were speaking in our quiet convent cell, ‘God calls me to die for Christ, he calls thee to live for him.’ He would have said more, but the executioners roughly thrust me aside.

“They were bound, and the fagots lighted. Through the dark smoke of the slowly-burning pile I saw Heinrich’s face, ‘as it had been the face of an angel.’ Upraised to the calm blue summer sky which smiled down on that scene of agony and death, his noble features and clear earnest eyes were radiant with holy joy and triumph. The fire consumed the cords that bound him. Immediately he knelt in the midst of the flames, and raising his clasped hands in prayer, called still upon the name of Jesus. Then, as the flames blazed high round him and his brother-martyr, their voices rose in the solemn, triumphant strains of the ‘Te Deum Laudamus,’ till their choked utterance and failing breath were exchanged for the victorious measure of the new song before the throne. Man had done his worst, the malice of Satan had been wrought out ; but both were foiled. ‘Thanks

be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Amen!" was the heartfelt rejoinder of every lip.

At last some one broke the solemn stillness by asking: "And Lambert—what of him?"

"A brief conflict in a lonely dungeon cell, a bitter repentance, and a bold confession. A few weeks afterwards another pile was raised at Brussels, another martyr-crown bestowed in heaven."

One at least of that listening group heard not the words that followed. On Bertha's ear, linked with that thrilling tale of martyr faith and triumph, had fallen the name which had been to her earth's sweetest music, round which gathered at once the deepest anguish and the most precious memories of her life. Its remembrance had passed from her father's mind; and though, since Kaspar Nordeck's confession had unsealed her lips, she had sometimes spoken of her Heinrich to Madeline and Paul, the former, not knowing into what convent he had retired, did not recognize in the name of the martyr-monk one that meant so much to her sister.

But Paul did; and when at last Bertha rose, and swiftly and silently left the room, he drew Madeline down beside him and whispered the truth. "Go to her, Madeline," he said; "God strengthen her, and make her rejoice to give up her best to him. There are other martyrdoms than those of the pile and the scaffold."

When Madeline entered her sister's room, she found her, not weeping, not even sorrow-stricken. A triumphant light shone in her dark, tearless eyes, and a look of solemn gladness that was almost a smile rested on her pale features as she turned and said, "Madeline, it was *he*—my Heinrich, my noble Heinrich! God's, and yet mine. God's faithful martyr, yet mine own true love!"

And as Madeline looked up through her tears at the calmly radiant face, she continued: "Weep not, Madeline—I cannot;

rather rejoice for him and for me. O Madeline, thou knowest not the joy, the deep, deep joy, it is to know him to have been faithful, and noble, and true. But that is not all. In the light of that blazing pile I see clearly ; the faith for which he died burns high and strong in my heart. Our paths have met at last : in Him for whom he died, for whom I may yet live."

And this was no passing enthusiasm of high, strong excitement, to be followed by the reaction of overwrought feeling. Her spirit had really exultingly cast off the chains of unbelief, and springing upward through the chill mists of doubt and despondency, soared into the pure upper atmosphere of love, and light, and liberty. Like him she had loved best on earth, she had looked up and met the eyes of Infinite Love, and was satisfied.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OLD URSEL'S STORY.

" Yet rejoicing in his lot,
Still shall memory love to weep
O'er the venerable spot
Where his dear cold relics sleep.

" Grave ! the guardian of his dust,
Grave ! the treasury of the skies ;
Every atom of thy trust
Rests in hope, again to rise."—ROBERT MONTGOMERY.



FOR nearly two years after Muriel's flight, Madeline had remained at Vaudemont. Lady Emmengarde had never recovered the shock of Muriel's loss ; her health was broken, all interest in her old occupations was gone ; and she had sunk into a state of listless, apathetic depression, from which it was impossible to rouse her. Madeline really loved her,—and she was Raymond's mother ; therefore she cheerfully endured her long banishment from the dear home towards which her heart yearned painfully, and devoted her young life to the task of cheering and soothing that blighted and disappointed one,—not without effect. The poor lady clung to her with a confiding, dependent affection that was very touching ; and Madeline hoped that, slowly but surely, the light of the gospel was dawning upon that feeble, clouded mind.

From Muriel no tidings reached them. She had steadily refused all communication with the outer world from the first

Between those who loved her and herself there rose a barrier bitterer far than that of death, for it was of her own raising.

To Madeline these two years had been a time of varied trial and discipline. At first, her deep sympathy with the bereaved parent, and the happy consciousness of Raymond's love in her secret heart, made her burden seem light. Then came months of painful suspense, during which no tidings arrived from those distant battle-fields on the fair Italian plains, reddened with the best blood of Spain and France and Germany. Day after day she had to listen to Lady Ermengarde's desponding forebodings, and give no sign of the terrible anxiety that weighed upon her own spirit, and to speak with cheerful tones of hopes which her fears mocked.

And in those days the great love which had taken possession of her heart grew and deepened. Yet—perhaps therefore—when at last news came from Raymond,—a letter telling of wounds, and long imprisonment, and deliverance at last,—the first doubts of the constancy of his stole into her heart, doubts that at first she repelled as unworthy of herself and him; but they had a barbed point, and rankled sorely. Had she not steadily, positively put from her every link he had sought to establish between them? had she not suffered him to depart in silence with his words of love and trust unanswered? Who could blame him, if he should find in some fair and high-born maiden a heart that would beat in unison with his own; if he should do as she had bidden him—forget her? Slowly the happy glow faded from her heart; slowly, but surely, the cold chill of doubt and fear settled round it. The sweet hopes that had been so precious to her she grew to regard as presumptuous and vain, and to school herself to be content to love Raymond only, as she had told Lady Ermengarde, as “a flower loves the sun.”

It was hard and bitter work, and at last, after a vain struggle, she turned wearily to Him whose love fails not, changes not, and left all in His hands. Then her heart grew calm and

patient, in the deep, restful assurance of a love above, beyond all earthly love, an ocean to which all human affection was but as a quivering dew-drop.

In the autumn of 1522, her uncle, Andrew Reinhardt, died. When young Wolfgang Wissemberger—whose earnest voice had long preached Christ in Basle, in the lowly chapel of which he was pastor—brought to his bed-side a copy of Luther's translation of the Scriptures, fresh from the press of Frobenius, he took it in his hands and said,—“My friend, thy voice will reach the ears of hundreds, those of Martin Luther and Ulric Zwingle those of thousands; but this book will speak to the hearts of millions. I thank God I have lived to see this day.” Then clasping the book to his heart, he raised his eyes to heaven, saying, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Shortly after, he died; and, in compliance with his dying request, the Frau Katterin sent a German Bible to Madeline as a last and best token of his love.

Welcome was that precious book to Madeline, coming as a messenger of love, bringing help, and comfort, and guidance when she so sorely needed them. Through the dreary winter that followed she daily drew new riches from its exhaustless treasury. And sometimes, in the long evenings, in place of the sweet sounds of the lute that hung unstrung and silent on the wall, the story of the life and death of Jesus would be listened to within those old walls. Not by the Lady Ermengarde alone. Often the Baron would leave his favourite seat by the blazing logs in the hall, and seek his wife's apartment. He had grown feebler of late; and old Ludwig had died in peace some months before, resting in the pardon bought by the blood shed on the cross of Calvary, and sealed by the empty grave of Christ. How much or how little the Baron heard and understood, was hard to say. Sometimes he would make a sudden quaint remark that showed he heard, at others he would seem to sleep. But when one day, coming in from the chase, he suddenly sank

speechless into his great chair, smitten unto death, it was a comfort to Madeline to remember that he had at least heard of Jesus ; not of a new doctrine, but of a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

He lingered many days, and sometimes Madeline thought there was reason in the dim eyes, though the palsied lips were mute ; but she could not be sure. At the very last there was a gleam of consciousness, and he twice called, " Muriel, Muriel." But there was no Muriel to answer.

His death, in the early summer of 1523, rendered it still more difficult for Madeline to leave her widowed friend. The tidings of her father's death were sent to Muriel in her convent cell, and a courier despatched with letters to Raymond, requesting his immediate return, to comfort his widowed mother, and to take possession of his estates. He wrote, saying he could not fix the exact time his arrival might be expected at Vaudemont ; but he would endeavour to expedite it as much as possible, and should, undoubtedly, be home before the end of August.

From the receipt of that letter Lady Ermengarde's spirits rose ; her health proportionally improved, and all her thoughts centred upon the hope of her son's speedy return, and the rest and happiness his beloved presence would bring her.

Constantly Madeline was called upon to rejoice with her, and to listen to her plans for him in the future. She seemed to forget that Raymond was no longer a boy, to be ruled and guided, but a man to rule and guide. And did she not also forget, Madeline asked herself, that he had once loved *her* ?

So it seemed ; but it was not wholly so. Yet always finding it easy to believe what she wished, Lady Ermengarde had fully convinced herself that Madeline's heart was free ; and though sometimes she doubted whether Raymond could so soon have forgotten her, she persuaded herself it must, it would be so. But as the time drew near for his return, the sick dread and fear in Madeline's heart increased, though at times hope and

trust were stronger. At any rate, she resolved at once to go home to Zurich. If he had forgotten her, she could better bear that the knowledge should come to her there. If not, she knew herself to be no heroine, and that her woman's heart would be powerless a second time to resist his tender pleadings. And would it not be a treacherous abuse of the Lady Ermengarde's blind confidence, a cruel thing, to bring down all her high hopes of Raymond's future into the dust of disappointment? And perhaps some secret whisper told her, that if he still loved her, the road to Zurich was open.

Without difficulty, she obtained Lady Ermengarde's consent that she should set out at once. She had noticed that Madeline had been pale and drooping of late, and attributed it in part to her longings after the family she so tenderly loved; and her kind heart was touched with sympathy. And she was, doubtless, not sorry that Raymond should miss an opportunity of reviving his forgotten passion. But as the day for Madeline's departure approached, had that fear been the only reason for allowing her to leave, she would gladly have risked her remaining. But she really felt she had no right to withhold the permission Madeline so earnestly besought, and contented herself with gaining from her a promise that she would return to her whenever she needed her.

All arrangements had been made for her journey, and Madeline had paid her last visit to the poor cottages of the village, and stood for the last time by her grandfather's grave—that grave which, more than all else, rose between her and Raymond. One poor hut, far away up the mountain-side, still remained to be visited. It was a long, toilsome walk, and Madeline was wearied and depressed; nevertheless, she could not leave its lonely inmate without a kind farewell. Months before, in one of her walks on the mountain, she had seen before her a boy of some fourteen years staggering up the steep path under a load of fagots, which, though not heavy in itself, was evidently too much for his feeble strength. At last he sank suddenly to

the ground ; and when Madeline reached him, she found him gasping for breath, and wholly unable to proceed. The short, dry cough, that shook his wasted frame, and the burning, crimson spot upon his hollow cheek, told the story of wasting disease and approaching death. Madeline had helped him homeward with his burden to the little hut in which he lived with his old grandmother, winning his heart by the gentle kindness of her words, and the tender pity that did not shrink from his rags and wretchedness. Months afterwards, from the wretched pallet of dried leaves in that poor mountain hut a ransomed, rejoicing spirit, had gone up to join the white-robed multitude above. In spite of opposition and invective from the old grandmother, who from the first had shown towards her a strange dislike that was akin to fear, Madeline had ministered to the poor sufferer's needs, toiling up the steep mountain path through wintry storm and snow, dressing with her own hands the wounds rendered loathsome by neglect, and pouring forth in the wondering ears of the dying boy the sweet story of the love of Jesus. "Like ointment poured forth," had that name been to that poor, lonely heart, healing every wound, cleansing every defilement. The day came when the moan of pain was exchanged for the voice of adoring gratitude and praise, that ever swelled higher and fuller as its earthly tones grew weaker, until it was lost at last in the swelling strains of the everlasting song.

Then Madeline turned to old Ursel, who had lost in poor Fulk the only tie that bound her to a world which to her was bleak and dreary as the bare mountain-side on which her hut was built. Hated and feared by the people of the village ; hated on account of the harshness and violence of her temper ; feared, by reason of the dealings with the evil one with which their superstitions had accredited her—"her hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against her." But not in vain had Madeline sought to tread in her Master's steps. There was one tender spot in that dark, imbittered heart—

her love for her orphan grandson, like herself despised and shunned by the villagers. And as she saw the unwearied love and sympathy with which Madeline tended him, that spot was reached ; and, by degrees, the words of that wonderful Book, so sweet and simple that a child may comprehend them, so deep and strong that a sage may not fathom them, entered there too. Few days ever passed without finding Madeline in old Ursel's hut. And yet, though the old woman had learned to look for her visits, and welcome her as an angel of hope and comfort, for some reason Madeline's presence at times seemed painful to her.

It was to this cottage that Madeline bent her way that day. She told Ursel of the Lady Ermengarde's promise to supply her temporal needs, and bade her trust Him who was once poor and despised on earth ; "poorer even than thou art, Ursel," she said, "for He had not even where to lay His head."

But to all she said Ursel appeared to give but slight attention, sitting with her elbows on her knees, and her face hidden in her hands ; and Madeline, opening her Bible, read of the woman of despised race whom the disciples would have sent away—of the blind beggar whose importunate cry had disturbed the listening multitudes, and called forth from them the angry command to hold his peace—and lastly, of the poor, erring one, upon whom the proud Pharisee looked with scornful loathing, who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Then taking old Ursel's withered hands in hers, she said, "Ursel, thou seest 'He will in no wise cast out.' To the poor heathen woman he said, 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt ;' to the blind beggar, 'Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole ;' to the sinful woman, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee ; go in peace.' To all three he gave what they wanted : to the heathen healing, to the beggar sight, to the sinner pardon. Men despised all three, and would have kept them away. But they could not. Ursel, he is the same still,—'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

Thou sayest, when I am gone none will care for thee. *He* cares, though all despise and hate thee. He loves thee, He who became houseless and homeless that thou mightest have a home above. He who died for thee, Ursel, poor, and old, and sinful, despised and forsaken of all men as thou art,—He loves thee. He says to thee, '*I* will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.' " There were tears in Madeline's eyes, and, bending down, she kissed the wrinkled cheek of the old goatherd.

Then the old woman, down whose withered cheeks the tears had been silently rolling, clasped Madeline's small, soft hands tight in her own hard, brown ones, and pressed them to her lips and her heart. "It is true," she said, "it is true. What that Book says of men is true. Why not what it says of Him? Yes, he loves me, poor old Ursel, whom the people call the devil's daughter. Well, they have not been so far wrong. But He forgave the thief on the cross. Ah, lady, read me that wonderful story once more, and then I will tell thee all."

Madeline did so. "Yes," Ursel said, "He forgave him; He did not even reproach him. He forgave him; and thou wilt forgive me; say thou wilt forgive me," she continued, looking up imploringly at Madeline.

"I forgive thee, Ursel! thou hast not wronged me."

"I have, I have; but thou wilt forgive me. Thou belongest to Him who forgives sinners, who forgave that poor thief. But for thy love to me and my poor Fulk I had never believed His."

By degrees Madeline gathered that some secret crime lay heavy at her heart, and that she could not rest until she had confessed it. Yet how this crime could concern herself, she could not imagine. But Ursel looked piteously into her face and pleaded, "Thou sayest thou wilt forgive. Promise me, also, that thou wilt not betray me,—that thou wilt never breathe what I am about to tell thee to living soul till I am dead. Promise me before *Him*," and she pointed upwards. Madeline did so.

Little was she prepared for the revelation that followed. With suspended breath and straining ears she listened while old Ursel told how long, long years before—how many she could not tell—when she was a young woman, living in a shepherd's hut on a distant part of the mountain, her husband had found something more than the sheep he was seeking in an early snow-storm on the mountain-side—the senseless form of a man with a little child wrapped closely to his breast. This part of the story Madeline knew well. But Ursel had more to tell. The stranger was dressed in peasant garb, she said, with a pedlar's coarse cloak wrapped round him ; but there was a stately grace in his mien, even as he lay suffering on their coarse bed, and a quiet dignity in his manner, that made them feel sure he was other than he seemed.

The storm raged fiercely round the mountain, and it was hazardous to attempt reaching the village by a narrow, dizzy path, that alone led to it. But as it was soon evident that the wanderer's sickness was unto death, Fulk, her husband, would have braved the storm to have sought the services of a priest ; but the stranger had no wish for one. His faith, he told them, was in Christ, in Christ alone. A stranger and alone, dying, and leaving the beautiful child—who clung to him, and resisted all efforts to remove her from the bed on which he lay—unprotected, uncared for, in a cold and evil world, no fear, no distress, moved the wonderful calm that rested on his young and noble face. Strange words he spoke to them, such as had never again met her ear till Madeline, sitting by the bedside of the dying boy, had spoken the same, awaking at once buried memories and the stings of an accusing conscience. It was the story of the gospel he told them—of the cross of Christ. For the sake of that gospel, he said, the mother of his child had been laid in an early and blood-stained grave, and his own locks bleached with a terrible sorrow. For that gospel's sake he was dying there, far from home and country, a wanderer and an exile. But there was a light as of triumph in his eye

as he declared that "He was worthy for whom he should do this," and pointed them to Him as the one only Saviour.

Before his death he asked them to bring to him the pack he had carried, and turning aside the ribbons and laces it contained, revealed some jewels concealed in the lining, and a small book. These he bade them convey to the lady of the nearest castle, with a few lines his dying hand traced feebly on a scrap of parchment. Then taking from his own neck a jewelled miniature that hung next his heart, with a long tress of woman's hair, he tied them round the child's, and sinking back exhausted with the babe folded to his breast, raised his eyes, and said, "Father of the fatherless, to thee I commit my child. Orphaned for thy sake, thou wilt care for her. Father, lead her into thy light." Then a veil passed over the lifted eyes, a shadow fell upon the noble features, the clasping arms relaxed, and the babe lay smiling upon a dead father's breast.

Then came the tale of shame and sin. The glittering jewels had been too great a temptation. They had removed them and the book from the pack, filled it with its comparatively worthless contents, and then, to avoid suspicion, Fulk had taken it to the castle, where the infant had already been received,—the miniature and hair having been previously removed lest the rank of the supposed pedlar should be betrayed. They sought to soothe their guilty consciences by telling one another that the dead man had been a heretic, and that they had but secured their lawful booty. The jewels did not benefit them, however: not knowing how to turn them into money, her husband had taken a travelling pedlar into his confidence, and he had robbed them of all but the miniature. Misfortunes had pursued them, their children died, their hut was burned down, and Ursel at last was left with only one sickly grandchild—and now he too was gone. "God is terrible, God is just," she ended; "but oh, lady, he forgives,—he forgave the thief,—thou knowest it. Lady, wilt thou forgive? That poor wronged babe was thy mother!"

"I know it, Ursel," Madeline said.

"We were poor," Ursel pleaded ; "our children half-naked and often crying with hunger. No one cared for us, no one pitied us. And we dared not believe the good words the dying man spoke. They were not such as the priests told us—"

"Yes," Madeline said quickly, "the temptation was great ; but, Ursel, knowest thou not his name,—my grandfather's ?—and the miniature—ah ! is that gone too ?"

For answer old Ursel rose, and with difficulty mounting a wooden bench, drew out a small bundle from a hole under the roof. "I kept it," she said—"I scarcely knew why, for I could not bear to look at it. The sweet, pure, loving eyes seemed to pierce my heart, and often in my dreams they have looked upon me and reproached me for the cruel wrong done to her child."

From the old rags with which they were enveloped she drew out the charred remnants of a book, the lock of hair, and the miniature from which the setting of gold and jewels had been removed. "When thou seest these," she said, "thou wilt know why thy presence brought my sin to my memory, and made me dread to meet thy gentle eyes."

Madeline gazed long at the fair, sweet face, whose soft hazel eyes seemed to meet hers with a strangely familiar look. The old woman took up the long tress of light brown hair, and laid it against the shining braids from which Madeline's hood had fallen. "It might have been thine own," she said, "even as that picture."

A swift, sudden thought flashed into Madeline's mind. "His name," she gasped ; "oh, Ursel, thou rememberest it ! No ! Then the paper he wrote ! Ah, thou hast it ! That will tell all !"

"Three several times I threw it in the flames," Ursel said, "and three times it came back upon the cottage-hearth. Then I felt it was useless to try to destroy what the hand of the dying had made a sacred spell. And the fire could not con-

sume it. Among the ashes of our burned home I found this book, scorched and blackened as thou seest, but not destroyed. And in it those charmed words. Since then I have guarded them as a holy relic."

Eagerly Madeline's trembling hands turned over the charred leaves, in which she recognized, with a thrill of solemnity, God's living words of truth, in spite of the strange dialect in which they were written. At last she found the precious paper. The faded, tremulous characters, were still legible, and it ran thus:—

"TO THE LADY ERMENGARDE DE VAUDEMONT AND VON OHRENDORF,—I, a noble, in whose veins runs the best blood of Bohemia, exiled from home and country for the sake of that same gospel for which apostles and martyrs were content to die, commit to thy charge my orphan child. Thou art a woman and a mother. To thee, under God, I intrust my little Constance, whose mother, slain for the faith of Christ, lies in a lonely blood-stained grave in a dark Bohemian forest. To God thou must answer how thou fulfillest this charge. That God in whom has been all my hope and trust in life, that Saviour in whose blood is all my hope and confidence in death, watch between me and thee.

"THEODORE ROSTHA."

Till the twilight shadows, fast gathering round the lonely mountain hut, forced her to depart, Madeline lingered, hanging on every word that fell from the lips of old Ursel, whose memory, feeble and failing to other events, still strongly retained the impressions of those long-past scenes. Vividly rose before her that mournful scene in the red glow of the wintry sunset, on the borders of that dark Bohemian forest, when the murdered wife's young life had ebbed out on her husband's breast,—when the widowed father had knelt with his orphaned babe and pleaded, like his Master, for pardon for the murderers. That wild thought, that thrilling possibility that had first come

to her when the dying lips of Sister Elizabeth had told her the strange, sad tale that had, like a haunting dream-voice, followed her ever since, was truth. In her veins ran the noble martyr-blood of Theodore and Constance Rostha !

Forced at last to tear herself away, like one in some strange dream, she soothed old Ursel's fears with assurances of forgiveness and renewed promises of secrecy until her death ; and it was not until the shadows of the towers of Vaudemont fell on her path that she reflected how much this promise might cost her. But it was given,—solemnly given,—it was too late to recall it. It was impossible for her again to seek the cottage ; a stormy night was gathering darkly round the lonely mountain path, and Lady Ermengarde would already be anxious at her long delay. So after a few minutes spent at her grandfather's grave, ever a place of such tender mournful interest to her, and then doubly hallowed as the resting-place of a martyr's dust, she returned to the castle, bearing with her the charred gospels, the precious paper, and the miniature, which old Ursel had given up to her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MADELINE'S TRIAL.

' Be not o'ermastered by thy pain,
But cling to God,—thou shalt not fall :
The floods sweep over thee in vain,
Thou yet shalt rise above them all ;
For when thy trial seems too hard to bear,
Lo, God, thy King, hath granted all thy prayer.
Be thou content !"—PAUL GERHARDT.



IT was in the early part of September that Madeline had arrived at Zurich, after a brief stay with her widowed aunt at Basle. Lady Ermengarde had been overwhelmed with grief at parting with her, but Madeline little imagined how utter was the blank her absence left in the lady's lonely heart and life.

October came, but no tidings from Vaudemont. And in the realization of the weary sickness of hope deferred, Madeline learned how strong had been that hope ; how the doubts and fears that had seemed to overcome it had been only as weeds and driftwood floating on the surface of her heart's great deep, hiding, but not disturbing, the rich treasures of love and trust that lay below the troubled moving waters. But now, as week after week went by, and no tidings came, her heart died away within her. Raymond had already forgotten her, or, yielding to his mother's entreaties, was content to learn to do so ! It was wisest,—it was best,—she sought to teach her heart to acknowledge ; but hearts are stubborn things.

"A wounded spirit who can bear?" asks the wisest of all earth's sages; nay, asks He who best knows the secret springs of the hearts He has made; and truly poor Madeline's was such. It was not likely that the penetrating eye of love would not discover this. Gentle and cheerful as she was, with a sweet smile ever ready in the pale cheek and mournful eye, unmistakable traces of sorrow and pain were apparent to its discerning gaze.

To Paul and Bertha the cause of this was no mystery. Too well they divined why the name of Raymond von Ohrendorf never passed her lips save when imperative necessity demanded it—why the swift blood went and came in her cheek while others spoke it—why she shrank, as though a bare nerve were touched, when Max pleaded the cause of his friend Gottfried Roust, son of the burgomaster, who had long loved her, whom she daily dreaded to hear her father command her to accept as her future husband. But they knew also that her grief was one best left to the care of the Great Healer, before whose eye alone she could spread it forth; and to Paul's influence with his father she owed her escape, for the present at least, from the ordeal she dreaded—through which she felt it would be impossible to pass without revealing her heart's closely guarded secret.

Full of pain as those days were, they were blessed ones to Madeline; for they drove her closer to the Heart that knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and made her cling more confidently to the Hand which had just gathered the brightest flower from her pathway. Yes; His Hand had taken it. "Himself had done it." And he made her content to walk even in that dreary shadow, for it was *with Him*.

At last came a letter from the Lady Ermengarde. Madeline was with Paul, then confined to his room by one of his frequent attacks of prostration and pain, when it was brought to her. Paul's heart yearned anxiously over her as he saw how her hands trembled as they slowly unbound the silken cord that

fastened it, how the quick blood went and came in the cheek that had been so sadly pale of late. As she read, a warm, bright glow mantled her face, a glad, wondering light came into her eyes, a tremulous half-smile played round her lips ; but ere it was finished every particle of colour fled from her face, the quivering lips grew white and still, the trembling hands, still holding the letter in a rigid grasp, fell powerless on her knees. No word, no cry came from her pale, parted lips, but her whole mien and look was that of one stricken to the very heart's core.

Paul could not bear to see her thus : she sat close beside his couch, and after a few long minutes, through which she preserved the same marble stillness, he laid his hand gently upon hers. She started, and turned upon him a wild look of utter bewilderment and anguish. But as she met the love, and sympathy, and comprehension that shone through tears in his dark, speaking eyes, the spell was broken, and with a low, inarticulate cry of agony, she threw herself into his outstretched arms.

"My Madeline," he whispered, "there is a love that changeth not. It is everlasting, and passeth knowledge. And that love is still thine." Then she knew that Paul understood all.

Lady Ermengarde's letter ran thus :—

"MY CHILD, MY OWN SWEET MADELINE,—These lines to tell thee how I have missed thee, how I miss thee still, daily, hourly, —thou that hast indeed been to me as a daughter in place of her who is dead to me, my Muriel, my own, my beautiful ! In thine absence hers is doubly bitter.

Ah, Madeline, I knew not half of thy gentle worth, dearly as I have ever loved thee, till thou wert gone. When thou returnest, thou shalt know better how much thou art to me. I am not ready with my pen, as thou knowest, and cannot write thee half as I would ; but, Madeline, thou hast a daughter's place in my heart, wilt thou not again come and fill a daughter's

place in my home? I am lonely without thee, even with my Raymond, my noble, gentle Raymond. O Madeline, thou knowest all he was,—how kind, and tender, and wise,—how beautiful, and brave,—all that the fondest mother's heart could wish! He has come back to me unchanged, save for the better, if that indeed can be. When he lay bleeding, and as he thought dying, on the battle-field, the words thou lovest so well came home to his heart and gave him a new life. For Christ he means to live now, he says; not for liberty or truth only. If thou and he can live for Christ in the world, could not my Muriel have done so too? Ah me! death parts soon enough!

"My health has been worse of late without thy careful tendence. And the peasants and the people of the village miss thee sorely. Hans Gärtner's sick child is dead, and so is old Ursel. I was glad to hear that thy family were well. Will they spare thee to me again? Ah, my child, come back to me!

"Raymond sends thee greeting. In confidence I tell thee that he has chosen a bride at last, one whom it will be joy and honour to me to call daughter; not, indeed, the Lady Juliette, as I once so earnestly wished, but one gentler and worthier, if not fairer. She is worthy even of my Raymond, and thou knowest that is saying much. When thou hearest from me again, as thou shalt do soon, thou shalt know more of this. And remember I ask thee to bestow on the messenger what he demands of thee.

"Farewell, my Madeline. Send thine answer by the bearer of my next packet.

"ERMENGARDE DE VAUDEMONT AND

"VON OHRENDORF."

No words were spoken as Madeline lay, like a poor crushed flower, folded closely to Paul's sympathizing breast; no words, at least, save the unspoken pleadings that Paul sent up to Him

who needs not human utterance to make the burdened heart's mute language intelligible. Presently Bertha came in, and to her care Paul committed Madeline. The sudden falling of the long-dreaded blow had deprived her of physical strength, and she submitted unresistingly to be led away to her own room and laid upon her bed. Then looking up in Bertha's pitying eyes, she said, "I see thou knowest, Bertha. I have not kept my secret well;" and as the tears Bertha had so seldom shed for her own grief fell upon her face as she silently kissed the pale, cold cheek, she gave the letter which she had hitherto grasped convulsively into her hand, saying, "Take this and read it with Paul. But oh, Bertha, do not let Paul reproach *him*!—do not thou blame *him*! I could not bear that."

Then she turned her face to the wall. Not to weep, her anguish was too deep for tears. All the deep love of her heart had sprung up as she read Lady Ermengarde's letter, and the words, "Thou hast a daughter's place in my heart, wilt thou not come and fill a daughter's place in my home?" had flashed upon her a ray of hope so wild, so bright as to dazzle her. Then came the blow that quenched it,—the hope, not the love.

In the midst of her pain she strove to excuse Raymond,—he was not, could not be false. He had but done her bidding,—how could he think the love that seemed to hold his so cheaply worth weighing against all the disadvantages attached to it? And for his sake, to clear his name from any reproach of falsehood or fickleness, she resolved to tell all to Bertha and Paul,—all, that is, that needed be told. Yet in spite of this the sting of her sorrow was the consciousness she strove so hard against, that he *had* changed, that he *had* forgotten her. And now, when it was too late, old Ursel was dead, and he would learn that her mother's lineage was as noble as his own,—nobler in God's sight, for was she not the child of his martyrs? Yet it was scarcely to be regretted that this knowledge should come too late, since his love had been so light and passing.

Slowly, wearily the long hours of that dreary November day wore on. Bertha's care secured her all she craved,—solitude and secrecy. But in the early twilight she stole softly into Paul's room, where he and Bertha sat alone, with calm, pale, mournful face and quiet manner. She sat down beside Paul in her usual seat, and laid her hand in his, while in a few quiet words she told her story. "You have seen," she said, "that I loved Raymond von Ohrendorf. And once he thought—and I thought—that he loved me. But I knew that I, the burgher maiden, was no fitting bride for him, and I bade him forget me. He has done so ; that is all."

"Thou must forget him too, my sister," Paul said indignantly.

She turned her face to him with a strangely sweet, sad smile. "No, Paul, no," she said ; "never. I cannot. I would not, if I could. My love and my prayers will always be his,—his and the bride's he has chosen. A love on which God smiles can be no sin. And with my prayers for his blessing on them both, the bitterness passed from my heart. And in God's good time the pain will pass too. I shall be content to know him beloved, and happy, and noble. Already my heart's dearest prayer for him is answered. He is occupied with Christ, not with Christianity and Christendom."

Paul looked grave. "A true Christian and a false lover," he said ; "the characters scarce suit."

"He is not that ! O Paul, thou must not blame him ! He is noble,—and I, what am I to win such love as his ?"

"Yet he told thee he loved thee."

Madeline covered her face with her hands. "It was a dream," she said at last. "I must awake now. None know that I dreamed besides you two ?"

"None, dearest."

"Then never let them know. And after to-night help me to forget—not *him*, but the dream. And I have that to tell you which is no dream," she said after a silence. "My lips are

unsealed at last by old Ursel's death. You remember the tale of Theodore and Constance Rostha?"

"Yes," Paul answered wonderingly.

For a moment Madeline paused, overcome with emotion, and then said, in a low, earnest voice,—“Paul! Bertha! the little babe whose clothes were stained by its martyred mother's life-blood, was our own precious mother; that lowly, nameless grave in the village churchyard at Vaudemont holds the dust of that noble confessor of the truth, Theodore Rostha!”

“Impossible!” burst from the lips of Paul and Bertha.

“It is true!” And then she told them old Ursel's story.

Deep and proud was the solemn joy of the whole family in finding themselves thus linked, not with the great and the mighty of earth, but with the noble army of martyrs in heaven. To Clare the story of her mother's childhood had ever been an exhaustless treasury of tender, reverent interest and wonder, and now a whole world of new and deeper marvels opened before her. She and her father were never weary of talking over it. And in the light that had shone in upon the mother's soul, they all recognized the answer to the dying father's prayers; and traced the hand of God in the remarkable chain of circumstances which, after fifty years had passed, had brought these things to their knowledge. It is scarcely necessary to say with what reverent care the sacred relics of the martyr-dead were prized and guarded.

Meekly, patiently Madeline bowed before the blow that had struck down her dearest earthly hopes; she knew the hand that held the rod,—knew it, and loved it, and trusted it. But the pain was very keen. Sure she felt, highest heights or deepest depths would not have changed her love for Raymond, and upon her gentle heart the burden of slighted love and unrequited tenderness pressed heavily, cruelly. Her pale cheek, and weary, mournful eye, alone told of the inward suffering. No complaint passed her lips, and after that first night no direct allusion had been made to her grief. One thing per-

plexed her sorely,—how should she answer the Lady Ermengarde? To go to Vaudemont was impossible; to refuse seemed almost equally so. And gentle, and meek, and unselfish as her spirit was, she felt that, even for Lady Ermengarde's sake, she could not yet bear to meet Raymond.

Paul was still confined to his room, and in its quiet Madeline had found a welcome retreat, and in his delicate sympathy and affection her greatest earthly help. He knew so well how to comfort the troubled and sorrowful by the comfort wherewith he himself had been comforted of God. And his loving looks and tones, as he poured forth the balm of God's consolations into her bleeding heart, bespoke the comprehension and sympathy he never directly expressed. He knew that wound was best left untouched, save through the love and pity of the Great Physician.

One clear, bright day that succeeded a week of gloom, about a fortnight after the receipt of Lady Ermengarde's letter, Paul, beginning to rally from his attack, insisted on Madeline taking a walk in the bracing frosty air. She went, but in spite of the bright sunshine and invigorating atmosphere she returned wearied and depressed. She had chosen to go alone, leaving Clare with Paul, and memory had taken advantage of this to bring before her all that had been,—all that might have been. Listlessly, with slow, weary footsteps, she entered the house. Her father sat in his usual place in his large cushioned chair in the family room. He called her to him.

As she approached he rose, and, taking her hands in his, gazed searchingly into her face. "My poor little Madeline," he said, "thou hast borne thy sorrow bravely. But it is over now. Thou hast thy father's blessing, my child." Then he kissed the pale, wondering face, and turned away.

What could he mean? He had tottered from the room before Madeline could recover from her bewilderment. Mechanically she threw aside her cloak and hood, and entered Paul's room. He lay upon his couch before the blazing wood-fire

Was it only the reflection of the ruddy, dancing flames, or was there a bright flush upon his usually pale cheek, a glad light in his eye, a happy smile upon his lip? He was not alone; beside the hearth, with his back to the door, stood a young man, richly dressed and of stately presence. The door, lined and padded in the long-past days of Paul's worst sufferings, swung open and closed noiselessly. Madeline's heart sprang up with one wild bound as, following the movement of Paul's hand and eye, the stranger turned quickly round.

Another moment and Madeline was folded closely to the heart of Raymond von Ohrendorf! Then it seemed as if her senses reeled, as if she stood once more on the tottering rock, with the swift, dark waters rushing past, with Raymond's arms around her, and his deep, thrilling tones whispering tender words in her failing ears. "My Madeline! my Madeline! and thou thoughtest that I could forget thee?" they were saying with a reproachful tenderness that thrilled her very soul.

Then Raymond drew her aside into the deep window-seat. "Look up, mine own," he said. And in one quick, shy glance, she read, in the dark eyes that met hers, unchanged love, undimmed truth. All her doubts, all her fears, were forgotten in the dream-like bliss of the moments that followed.

But at last a word of Raymond's recalled to her mind the Lady Ermengarde's letter. She no longer doubted *him*; but a cold chill went to her heart as she said, "Thy mother, O Raymond, thy mother!"

"Did not my mother bid thee bestow on her messenger what he demanded of thee? I am that messenger, and thine heart and hand are what I ask. 'Thou wilt not refuse what thy father has already yielded?'"

"But, Raymond, thy mother spoke—of—of—"

"I know, dearest; Paul has told me all. My good, kind, foolish mother! She had arranged a little drama of her own, not considering how much her ruse might cost thy gentle heart. When I yielded to her entreaties that I would let her write to

thee and tell thee of my unchanged affection and her own glad consent to our union, I little thought what she purposed. And I had hoped to have been here a week ago. Could she but have seen thy dear face, pale and mournful with the pain of deeming me untrue, how bitterly she would have regretted it. Madeline, thou art the bride, gentler, worthier than even the fair Lady Juliette, on whom she rejoices that my heart is set. In token, she bade me bring thee this, to be used at our betrothal,"—and he drew from the breast of his doublet the Lady Ermengarde's own betrothal ring.

And then he told Madeline how her image had followed him in camps and battle-fields, in palaces and prisons, growing ever dearer and fairer; how, when he lay wounded and suffering, the memory of her earnest words had come home to him; how he had found she was right,—that it is not truth, but Him who is "the Truth," that must be the guide and stay of the heart and life; that not creeds, not doctrines, but a crucified Christ must be the ground of the soul's confidence; not a Church or a priesthood, but a risen, living Saviour, the object of the heart's deep trust. Then suddenly the beautiful framework of the gospel had become irradiated with living light. The Lord had come to his temple. Thenceforth his heart was Christ's.

In Lady Ermengarde's letters he had heard of Madeline, and, fully confiding in her affection, had reluctantly obeyed her injunction not to mention her in his own. His return home had been unavoidably delayed for some weeks after Madeline had reached Zurich; and in that time of loneliness Lady Ermengarde had, as she said, better learned the true worth of Madeline's character, and had offered no opposition or objection when Raymond had spoken of his deep, unchanged affection for her. "She is worthy of thee, Raymond," she said; "and perhaps, after all, the story of that poor grave in the village is well-nigh forgotten."

"It must never be forgotten!" Madeline exclaimed. "Ray

mond, there lies one of race and birth noble as thine own, and greater honour still,—one of God's martyrs."

"Thou art right, Madeline," he said, when she had told him of her mother's race and name; "it is more honour to be of martyr than of knightly race. And the latter needed not. Thy gentle worth is enough for me."

The next week there was festivity in the old house in the High Street of Zurich. Raymond von Ohrendorf and Madeline Reinhardt were solemnly betrothed in the presence of their relations and friends. And two months later, when the January snow lay deep in the valleys, Raymond took home his bride to the old castle in the Juras. The Lady Ermengarde met them with a mother's blessing and embrace; and in the familiar faces that crowded round to greet the young Baron's gentle bride, she read bright looks of affection and welcome.

Far away, in a distant convent cell, a pale, beautiful nun, wrestled with the unconquerable yearnings of human affection which the tidings of that happy bridal had called forth, and sought to drown the haunting echoes of beloved and long-lost voices that were ringing through her soul with the cold, formal Latin words, in which her heart's bitter need and anguish found no healing or relief.

And at that same hour, in a gloomy prison-room in Paris, a grave, sad man, young still, but with lines of thought and care traced deeply on cheeks and brow, sat thinking of the deserted castle in Provence, round which once such bright hopes gathered; of the lonely, blighted life, on whose vexed, troubled course, no sweet home-light from beloved eyes would ever shine. Guy de Montmédi was a prisoner of the Sorbonne; not for the truth of Christ, but for the violence with which he had attacked the corruptions of Rome.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS.

"This is the Lord's doing."—Ps. cxviii. 23.



S EVEN years have passed. The great light, of which Zurich still continued the focus, had spread to eight out of the thirteen cantons of Switzerland. The people of the Waldstettes, or Forest Cantons, remained stanch to the old faith, as though they had caught the spirit of the everlasting hills amidst which they dwelt, and, like them, resisted all changes.

Step by step, year by year, the work had progressed. It was no longer the abolition of the abuses of existing institutions that was aimed at, but that of the institutions themselves, as contrary to the Word of God. In 1525 the Mass had fallen at Zurich, and a simple worship, in accordance with the Word of God, had been established in the churches.

In the beginning of 1528 a conference was held at Berne, to which the four Swiss bishops of Constance, Basle, Sion, and Lausanne were invited. They declined to attend, because the Holy Scriptures were to be admitted as the sole and indisputable authority in spiritual things. Zwingli was present, and most of the Swiss champions of the gospel. The arguments of the defenders of Rome were scattered like chaff by the breath of the Spirit, while the burning words of Zwingli carried conviction and courage to the people. A priest, "pricked to the

heart " as he stood at the altar about to celebrate mass, flung aside his sacerdotal robes before the whole assembly. The tidings spread through the city ; men wondered and believed ; and on the great festival of St. Vincent, the patron saint of Berne, the altars were deserted, the temples empty. On the 28th of January, Zwingli mounted the cathedral-pulpit over the piled-up fragments of shattered altars and broken idols, and preached from Galatians v. 1 : " Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." On the 30th, a vast concourse of citizens of every degree filled the cathedral at the summons of the council, and lifting up their hands to heaven, swore to defend the two councils in the work of reform. On the 7th of February, the council published a general edict of reform.

The work spread throughout the canton ; the votes of the people were taken, and though no coercion was exercised, the whole canton, with a few exceptions, embraced the reform. A revolt of the peasants of the Waldstettes followed : eight hundred men of Unterwalden, zealous for the old faith, and incited by the clergy, invaded Berne ; but this, unlike the terrible peasant war of Germany in 1525, which had borne such terrible fruits of horror and bloodshed, came to nothing before the vigour and resolution of Berne.

In Basle the work of reform was accomplished with less unanimity and order. That city, the centre of intellectual light, had for six years enjoyed the preaching of the gospel. But the Romish party was in power ; and though the city councils contained many friends of the gospel doctrines, they contented themselves with half measures, till, incited probably by the events that had recently taken place at Berne, some citizens removed the images from the churches of St. Martin and of the Augustines. They were imprisoned, but speedily released. On the 23rd of December 1528, three hundred citizens presented a petition to the senate praying for reform. The bishop's partisans uttered threats of Austrian intervention, and

armed themselves ; the council deliberated and vacillated. Popular excitement ran high ; the city guards were turned out, chains were stretched across the street, and the city was placed in a state of siege. The accidental breaking of an image opened the sluices of a popular outbreak. Images, altars, pictures were torn down and destroyed, and the fragments burned. Seeing it was vain to seek to stem the torrent, the council yielded. The reform was established, February 1529.

Erasmus,—the timid, vacillating Erasmus, who had closed his door to his unhappy fugitive-friend, Ulrich von Hütten, lest his own peace and safety should be compromised,—become obnoxious to the people as the author of the temporizing measures which had been the cause of so much tumult, was obliged to flee from the city in which he had so long reigned supreme ; and the gentle, retiring Œcolampadius was placed at the head of the Reformed Church.

St. Gall, Appenzell, Glaris, Schaffhausen, the Grisons, and the Rhine districts, speedily followed the example of the leading cantons of Basle and Berne.

Thus, through difficulties, and dangers, and oppositions, the Reformation had triumphed in Switzerland. Without, the threatening edicts of the Diet, the menaces of Austria, the machinations of Rome, and the bitter animosity of the Walskettes ; within, the fanatical disorders of the Anabaptists,—had threatened its destruction. But it had triumphed. And on that triumph was inscribed, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Throughout the struggle, the steady hand, and earnest, upraised eye, and steadfast, faith-filled heart of Ulric Zwingli led the van. And so long as the sole weapons of his warfare were the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, they were mighty through God, and prevailed. Alas, alas ! the time came when that hand grasped another sword.

The summer of 1529 saw a sad sight in Switzerland—a foreshadowing of a still sadder one to come. Under the blue June

heaven confederate stood in arms against confederate. It is true no blood was shed, but the war of religion had begun. The war of religion! Strange-sounding words. The banner of the Prince of Peace waving over fields of blood and death! And the ministers of Christ's gospel marching beneath it *there!*

Enraged by the progress of the Reformation, and jealous of the new union formed by the evangelical cities, the Waldstettes concluded a secret alliance with Austria, Switzerland's ancient tyrant-foe. At the same time a cruel persecution was commenced in Thurgovia and the Rheinthal; and the martyrdom of a pastor named Keyser was the signal for war. The voice of Zwingle was heard, breathing even from the pulpit burning words that set men's hearts on fire. The free preaching of the gospel, the object for which he had toiled so long, was at stake. Misled by his patriotic feelings, and by the bias his mind had received from his youthful studies of the heroes and sages of old, he relinquished his entire dependence upon the unseen Hand that had guided him hitherto, and seized the carnal sword. Fatal error! destined to bear deadly fruit for himself and for Switzerland.

The men of Zurich were drawn up face to face with those of the Waldstettes. But ere swords were drawn a treaty was concluded. The alliance with Austria was destroyed, and liberty of conscience secured. The promptitude and energy of Zurich had been crowned with apparent success.

Henceforth we see in Ulric Zwingle not only the reformer, but also the patriot, the statesman, and the politician. The great object of his life was still undoubtedly the furtherance and establishment of the gospel of Christ, but he no longer sought it exclusively in the simple power of faith. The spirit of his country's heroic past, with which his young mind had been imbued by the cottage hearth-fire of the Tockenbergl, was with him still. In the deliverance of that country from a yoke more galling than that of Austria, in the defence of those

precious truths which alone can make men truly free, he saw a work to which he was called of God. It is not for us to judge him. To his own Master each servant stands or falls. But God will not give his glory to another. He will not use the arm of flesh, or be served by the chariots and horsemen of Egypt.

The year 1529 was an important one for the Reformation. In April, the reformed princes of Germany, with the Elector John at their head, made their noble "Protest" at the Diet of Spires. In October, Luther and Zwingli met for the first time. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, alarmed at the menacing attitude of the Emperor, then in alliance with Clement VII., and of his brother Ferdinand of Austria, was eagerly desirous of furthering evangelical union. To this the difference of opinions between Luther and Zwingli, and the party spirit that prevailed amongst their followers, seemed the chief obstacle. He therefore invited them to a conference. Luther accepted this invitation with reluctance; Zwingli with alacrity, though the dangers that attended his journey through hostile territory were so great that the Council of Zurich forbade his departure. The conference was held in a vaulted hall of the Castle of Marburg, and the reformers and their friends were entertained by Philip in a princely manner.

Had all entered that hall in the spirit of Francis Lambert, a Capuchin monk of Avignon, driven from France for the gospel, how blessed might have been the result. "I desire to be a sheet of blank paper on which the finger of God may write the truth," he said. And God fulfilled his desire; his eyes were opened to see the truth of the spiritual presence of Christ in the eucharist.

But in the violence and intolerance of Luther we see how true it is that the "treasure of God is in earthen vessels." Writing with chalk upon the velvet table-cover before him "THIS IS MY BODY," he vehemently refused to listen to the calm, dispassionate arguments of Zwingli and his colleagues.

And when, at the close of the conference, Zwingle came forward with outstretched hand, and pleaded with tears for brotherhood and union, he turned coldly away, saying, "You have a different spirit from ours!" It is true that ere they parted he himself offered to Zwingle and the Swiss doctors the hand of "peace and charity," but not of brotherhood in Christ.

Yet the exertions of Philip of Hesse were not altogether in vain. The paper drawn up by Luther and signed by the Swiss was printed; and men learned with surprise how agreed were the doctrines of both parties on all points save one—the bodily presence in the Lord's Supper. From thenceforth the contest became more moderate.

Luther and Zwingle saw each other's faces no more on earth. When their next meeting came, each had heard the Master's "Well done!" They saw "eye to eye" at last.

Thus great changes had been wrought in the seven years that had passed since Raymond von Ohrendorf had taken home his bride in January 1524. The truth of the gospel, no longer struggling against adverse tides, was firmly established in Zurich. In the churches the gorgeous altars were replaced by simple marble tables; for the formal Latin masses and prayers were substituted simple German services; the gospel was preached in almost every pulpit; the convents had become hospitals for the poor, or schools for the young.

And what changes had the seven years wrought in the families with which our story has to do? In the home of Ulric Zwingle little feet pattered up and down, and sweet childish voices made music for the mistaken, generous, overburdened heart, which "to the care of all the churches" had added that of the state also; and from the calm, tender eyes of a noble, loving wife, shone the faithful, comprehensive love, that makes the light of an earthly home.

Old faces were missing and new voices heard in the old house in the High Street. On the February afternoon on which we return to it we find but one familiar face in the

house-room—Bertha's. She sits, with her busy needle flying rapidly, while she superintends the first attempts at needlework of a fair-haired child on a little stool beside her. Her face is still grave and pale ; but there is a steady light in the calm, quiet eyes, and a look of repose on the brow, which still bears the lines of past sorrow, that tell of a burden gone and bitter waters healed.

Opposite to her is a young matron, with placid gentle face, and homely features beaming with love and kindly feeling, who rocks a cradle with her foot, while her plump hands are busy knitting a little sock, and her happy blue eyes follow the erratic pursuits of a sturdy boy of three. This is Rosa Hottinger,—the orphan daughter of the Claude Hottinger who had been banished for his mistaken zeal in the matter of the idol of Stadelhofen, and had so nobly sealed his faith with his blood at Lucerne,—now the happy wife of Friedel Reinhardt, and the mother of the little demure Marguerite ; and of the riotous Hans, in whose propensities for mischief and fun Bertha sees a reproduction of the other Hans, whose short life-journey ended in the terrible plague-year ; and of the baby Madeline.

The father's great chair is empty. Friedel is head of the household now ; Max is absent on one of the business journeys he so often finds necessary. His restless, impetuous spirit, is still untamed ; and the gospel is yet to him but as a political creed—the watchword of liberty, for nations, not for individuals. In one corner of the large room, put back against the wall, as though useless and unused, is the couch so long occupied by Paul's wasted, suffering frame.

Leaving little Marguerite watching for her father's return, and Bertha folding away the finished garment upon which she had been engaged, let us go forth into the street to greet other familiar faces.

In a distant quarter of the town stands the great convent of the Dominicans, now used as an hospital. Early that afternoon members of the poorer classes, with whose dwellings the

building is surrounded, have thronged into the chapel to hear the glad tidings of the gospel preached by the chaplain of the hospital. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble after the flesh, enter that humble chapel. But many a soul has there been born to God, many a poor sinner that came in in prodigal rags has gone out clothed in the best robe, rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

“Not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” was God’s unspeakable gift proclaimed there. From the heart of God to the preacher’s the message came; from the preacher’s it went straight to that of his hearers. To no new untried field had that labourer been appointed. The couches of suffering over which he bent so tenderly were no unfamiliar things to him. On one such, through long, hopeless years of darkness and despair, he had gathered deep experience of human guilt, and need, and suffering—on one such he had lain still, and listened, and learned, while God taught him how all that guilt and need and suffering was met in Christ, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” For the chaplain of the hospital at Zurich was Paul Reinhardt. His long apprenticeship was finished—a workman meet and approved for the Master’s use, he had been sent forth at last into the harvest-field.

Five years before, one of the many fugitives who fled from the persecution against the gospel in France arrived at Zurich. It was the young doctor who had accompanied the Viennese physician whose visit had been so dark a crisis in Paul’s life. He had not forgotten the suffering youth whose despairing anguish had so moved his kind heart, and had been led partly by that remembrance and partly by circumstances to make that special branch of disease his chief study. Great success had crowned his efforts; and on arriving at Zurich he had sought Paul, and finding him still a helpless sufferer, had proffered his services, assuring him that, with God’s blessing, he had every hope of mitigating his sufferings, if not of accom-

plishing a complete cure. His enlightened treatment succeeded even beyond his hopes. Paul recovered. Frail and crippled he would always be, but, bound no longer to a couch of pain, he was free to go forth and work for his Master. For two years past he had preached the gospel to the poor, and by the beds of the suffering and the dying. Long years of patient waiting were to be crowned by others of zealous, loving working.

The sermon was ended, but an earnest group still lingered round the pastor in the porch, claiming his wonted words of sympathy and counsel. The low clear tones of the still feeble voice, no word of which was yet unheard, were those of the Paul Reinhardt who had gathered the anxious, and ignorant, and doubtful youths around his couch,—whom we first saw as the petulant, wayward sufferer, imbittering his own and other lives by his murmuring, repining spirit. The face was little changed: the delicate chiselled features were pale as of old, the cheek wasted and hollow, the broad intellectual brow bore the indelible marks of past suffering. But the dark earnest eyes were full of life, and light, and energy, and an expression of holy gladness rested upon his whole countenance.

As he turned at last to depart, a young and noble-looking man, who had stood silently waiting while he spoke one by one to the people, came forward and offered him his arm. We should not need the mention of his name, coupled with Paul's thanks, to recognize in him Gerold Meyer von Knonau. The extreme physical beauty for which he had been remarkable in his boyhood remained unchanged, only intensified by the earnest thought and manliness stamped upon it; and his vigorous, well-developed frame, and glowing youthful face, formed as vivid a contrast to Paul's slight, bowed figure, and wasted, spiritual-looking countenance, as they had done of old.

For some time they proceeded in silence, and then Gerold said,—“Thy words go to the heart, Paul. They stir mine as even my father's burning eloquence fails to do. Or rather differently. His set my heart on fire, thine melt it with love;

his rouse me to do battle for the truth, thine move me to take up the cross and follow Him."

"His steps will never lead thee to battle-fields, Gerold," Paul answered sadly. "His cross was the end of all this world's strength, and pride, and glory for us who believe—the beginning of spiritual victory. In Him who has overcome by suffering and death alone can we overcome. Gerold, Gerold! I tremble for Switzerland, and for him who, letting go the arm of the Lord and the sword of the Spirit, trusts to the arm of flesh and the powers of this world."

"Thou mistakest him, Paul; Zwingli rests, as ever, upon God. Truly God alone must be our strength. But surely, surely, when he has given us so good a cause to defend, it behoves us to defend it. Must we sit down tamely while the Waldstettes torture, imprison, kill our fellow-believers, and speak shameful, lying words of us, that keep back poor deluded souls from the gospel; must we wait till the sword of the Emperor and of Rome is unsheathed, till the Word of God is torn from us, and the chains of spiritual as well as national slavery are laid again upon our country's neck? Thou knowest that the petition drawn up by Ecolampadius and the rest at my father's house in September was rejected with scorn. We only asked that the Word of God might be freely preached. And in the Diet last month they threatened open violence if the Abbot of St. Gall were not restored to his rights. How ill they have kept the treaty of June, thou knowest well. The alliance with Austria is broken only in name. The men of the Waldstettes broke the federal oath by their inaction when the Chatelain of Musso invaded our soil last year. They have appeared in the Landsgemeinde with the ominous pine-branch in their hats. Everywhere dangers menace the gospel. Must we sit still and see the work of past years swept away, and the land plunged into darkness? Will not God judge us if we act thus?"

"God will defend his own cause, Gerold. Of us, as of

Israel of old, he says, 'Their strength is to sit still.' O Gerold! where in that precious Word, to which thou and I, and so many thousands in Switzerland, owe all our light, and joy, and liberty this day, do we find a warrant for drawing the carnal sword in defence of God's gospel of peace? Jesus Christ says, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.' Not by the blood of battle-fields can victory be won for the Church of God, but by that of the scaffold and of martyr-piles, if God so wills it; not in alliances with the mighty of this world, but in simple, naked reliance on the power of Him who holds the hearts of kings in his hands. All power is his in heaven and on earth. And that power is ours by faith in him. Angels, and authorities, and powers are subject to him. Does he want the hand of Francis of France, red with the blood of his martyrs; the treasures of haughty, luxurious Venice; the sword of Philip of Hesse, champion of the gospel and of truth though he may be? Alas! when I think of these things, Gerold, my heart is overwhelmed within me. Trusting to God's strength, the infant Church of Switzerland is safe, though the whole forces of Rome and the Empire, and all the rage of Satan, be directed against her. Leaning on the arm of flesh—alas, alas! I dare not to think what may befall her!"

"Et tu, Brute!" exclaimed Gerold half sadly, half reproachfully. "There are voices enough without thine raised against him who, with the whole weight of a nation's life and liberty hanging upon his single arm, stands forth in the breach ready to sacrifice life itself, and toils night and day, unweariedly, unmurmuringly, faithfully. Who but Ulric Zwingli could guide the helm of the State amid these dangerous rocks and shoals? What eye and hand but his are clear and steady enough; what heart generous and devoted enough, save his? And in the path to which God has called him he will press on—one eye upon God, one upon the helm. Paul, thou wrongest that noble, faithful heart, true at once to God and his country."

"The Psalmist says, 'Mine eyes are unto thee,'" Paul an-

swered. "And, Gerold, God is my witness how dear is Ulric Zwingle to me ; but God and his glory are dearer still. Look around on Switzerland,—see the light of God's gospel radiating from mountain peak to mountain peak, from valley to valley, from the sunny slopes of the Italian bailiwicks to the rocky Juras—and little more than twelve years ago the people sat in darkness and the shadow of death. Whose work is this,—God's, or man's ? And is the work God's and the defence man's ? O Gerold ! there has no keener pang rent my soul since I knew the salvation of God in Christ, than those which pierce my heart when I hear the beloved lips, honoured above all others in Zurich and Switzerland as the first to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel of peace and love, breathe war, and sword, and carnal confidence—when I behold him who has so nobly, so faithfully wielded the two-edged sword of the Word, lay it down for fleshly weapons. Faithful to his convictions he will be ; ay, to the death. I judge him not. That Word, for the sake of which he chiefly strives, bears witness against the fatal error of his course. Gerold, thou knowest whose lips have said, 'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' " Paul's voice was low and solemn, and tears stood in the dark eyes he upraised to Gerold's troubled face.

"None are more averse to blood than Ulric Zwingle," Gerold said ; "to no heart is the glory of Christ dearer, or the pure precepts of the Word of God more precious."

"And yet no voice calls for war so loudly as his ; no voice will have done so much to kindle a flame that blood alone will quench," Paul answered sadly.

It was too true. Sinking the pastor and shepherd of souls in the patriot and the politician, Zwingle's clear head and bold spirit saw nothing but danger in inaction. In the council, in the pulpit, with his voice and his pen, he called for vigorous measures. As a patriot and statesman he was doubtless right ; as a minister and a reformer how fatally wrong, let the Word of God decide.

A deep shadow, as of troubled, doubtful thought, rested upon Gerold's noble countenance as they passed on in silence, and the very spirit of prayer shone with earnest solemnity on Paul's pale, upturned face.

At the door of a handsome house, a few streets from the home of the Reinhardts, they paused, and the shadow passed from Gerold's brow, and a proud light shone in his eye, as he said, "Thou wilt come in and see Clare and the babe, Paul?" Paul assented, and they entered together.

In a comfortable apartment in which the bright glow of a blazing wood-fire contended successfully with the gray twilight of the February afternoon, "little Clare" sat, or rather reclined, in a great cushioned chair beside the hearth, wrapped in a loose invalid robe, and with an infant on her lap. They heard her humming a low sweet song ere they entered, and her gentle face was bending over the child when they did so. The same sweet face, with the pure brow and earnest loving eyes, paler and more spiritual-looking even than of old—for the precious little life which had begun six weeks before had nearly cost her her own.

"All alone, mine own?" Gerold said, as he bent over her and his child.

"No, not alone," she said, pointing to the infant, and smiling up into his face with oh! such a look of happy, trustful love. "And I looked for thy coming. Thou art late, Gerold?"

"My slow steps detained him, Clare," said Paul, who had stood behind Gerold.

"Thou here, Paul!" and the glad, sweet eyes, transferred their welcome. "Thou hast not seen the babe for two whole days. See, he opens his eyes. Ah! are they not his father's own?" And again the loving eyes were raised to meet those that rested on her and her babe in one deep gaze of love.

"Knowest thou that thy father has returned from Basle, Gerold?" she said, when due attention had been paid to the

child, and her own and Paul's mutual inquiries had been answered.

"No ; how knowest thou, love ?"

"He has been here, Gerold, to see me and the babe, though he but reached the city at noon. He looked bright and full of hope. The Diet of the four cantons has agreed that when any disputes arise an assembly shall be called to decide by the Word of God alone. So there will be no more fear of war, Gerold. I could never again bear such days as those when thou wert in the camp,"—and she shuddered.

"My dearest, those are but the reformed cantons," he said ; "the danger lies with the Waldstettes. And they will none of the Word of God." But he turned the conversation to a subject less agitating to his fragile wife.

"Hast thou been to the hospital, Paul ?" Clare asked after a time.

"Yes ! to-day is sermon day, thou knowest."

"And thou hast preached ! Ah, when shall I be strong enough to hear thee again ? I begin to feel it is but a dream that thou, our Paul, art no longer ours only, but the people's. O Paul ! what a blessing thou must be. Thou knowest so well how to comfort the sick and the sorrowful."

"Yes, Clare, I thank God now for those long years of helplessness and pain ; through them I have learned lessons they alone could have taught."

"But, Paul," said Gerold, "why didst thou refuse the office of preacher at St. Peter's ? Is not thy light hid under a bushel in that poor, mean place ? Simple, unlearned men, such as Nicholas Dort, full of faith and love to souls, would do as well there. Thou, with thy great and brilliant talents, art meant for a high place. I would see thee fill such an one, brother."

A triumphant, joyful light shone in Paul's eyes, and a solemn smile lit up his pale features, as he answered, in low deep tones, "A high place, Gerold ! And what place is higher than mine !

For it was His upon earth. To preach the gospel to the poor, to go among the sick, the suffering, the leprous, the defiled,—a child of earth to do the very work the Son of the Highest did ! O Gerold ! and this is mine, mine ! Well may I daily, hourly exclaim with David, ‘ Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? ’ ”

Gerold bowed his head in silent, reverent assent, and the tears gleamed in Clare’s loving eyes.

Then Paul took his leave. Clare urged him to stay, but saying they would keep the evening meal waiting for him at home, he left, refusing Gerold’s assistance, which indeed was not indispensable. Lamé and feeble, Paul was yet able to go about his Master’s work with only his Master’s help and companionship.

But at the door he paused a moment, and looked back on that sweet domestic scene. Gerold had seated himself beside Clare, and thrown one arm round her, while the other hand toyed with the tiny fingers of their babe, and his earnest eyes seemed to absorb both in one comprehensive gaze of proudly tender love. Clare’s head rested against his shoulder, her sweet, delicate face, was turned half towards her husband, half bent over the placid face of the little slumberer on her knee, on which her eyes rested with all a young mother’s pride and joy. The glow of the dancing flames brought the two fair young faces vividly out on the dark background of the shadowy room, and embraced their youthful figures with a bright warm atmosphere of home comfort, that harmonized well with the deep restful love and joy that beamed in Clare’s pure, colourless face, and in Gerold’s noble countenance.

There are some scenes that stamp themselves indelibly upon the memory of the beholder, either for their exceeding beauty and joy, or for their exceeding darkness and pain. And this was of such. Tears were in Paul’s eyes as he looked ; and when the door was closed, and he made his way slowly through the gray, silent streets, it shone before him still. It did so to

the last, as the fairest, sweetest picture of happy love that earth could ever show.

Did a swift, fleeting shadow of repining pass over his spirit, —a saddened thought that such joys might never be his, stir the depths of his yearning heart as he viewed it? Well he knew no loving, gentle presence might ever make home for him, no little arms cling round his neck, or sweet tones call him "father." In the sunshine of other homes he might share, but the closest, dearest ties of human love were not for him. And his was a nature keenly to appreciate such.

It might be that it was so, for as he passed wearily along his head was bowed upon his breast, and his sensitive, finely-cut lips compressed as with pain. But as he laid his hand upon the door of the old house, he paused and raised his face to the evening sky. Again the joy-light filled his eye, and that sweet solemn smile lighted his pale features as he said aloud, "On earth, to tread in thy footprints; in heaven, to see thee as thou art: Lord, it is enough."

Then he entered the house. Immediately there was a glad cry of "Uncle Paul, Uncle Paul," as little Marguerite and Hans rushed to seize his hands and lead him into the bright, cheerful house-room.

CHAPTER XL.

SOWING AND REAPING IN NEUFCHÂTEL.

" Sow when the tempest lowers,
For calmer days may break ;
And the seed in darkness nourished,
A goodly plant may make.
Watch not the clouds above thee,
Let the wild winds round thee sweep ;
God may the seed-time give thee,
But another hand may reap."

Hymns for the Church on Earth.



AND what changes had those seven years wrought at Vaudemont ? Swiftly had they glided by, shadowed only by the silence and gloom that gathered round one beloved name, which yet was not that of death. Happy, childish voices, rang once more through the old vaulted rooms and passages, and the hallowed influence of a holy Christian home had been felt by all to whom it extended.

For years that home had been as one bright spot amidst surrounding darkness. Neufchâtel had long been a stronghold of Popery. The people, warmly attached to ancient rites and customs, were ignorant and superstitious in the highest degree, and ruled by a powerful clergy. The gay Princess de Longueville and the proud Countess de Vergy were equally devoted to Popery, with the powerful monks of Fontaine-André and the Benedictines of St. John. Thus the young Baron of Ohrendorf, enlightened and zealous as he was, had been unable to spread the truth beyond his mother's

limited estates of Vaudemont, part of which was held in fief of the Countess de Vergy, whose ancient friendship had been turned to the bitterest animosity, on account of Raymond's fearless espousal of the gospel. But Neufchâtel was not to be left in darkness amidst the surrounding light; the prayers of the believing family of Vaudemont were not to be left unanswered. In December 1529, a Frenchman, long a fugitive from his native land, began to preach the gospel fearlessly and successfully in the south of Switzerland, in the districts between the lakes of Geneva and Neufchâtel. This was William Farel, one of the two great Frenchmen to whom the Church of God in Switzerland owes so much.

Born in 1489 between Gap and Grenoble in Dauphiné, of an honourable family, he had been destined for the profession of arms. But from a child, religion, known to him only in the grossest forms of Papal superstition, exercised strong influence over his mind. In his early youth, the zeal and faith afterwards nobly displayed in the cause of Christ found vent in pilgrimages and blind devotion to the rites of the Church. At twenty-one he went to Paris, and became acquainted with the aged and pious Lefèvre, the father of the French Reformation. A strong affection sprang up between the old and learned doctor and the young and ardent student. Together they studied the works of the Fathers and the Scriptures of God; together, by slow stages, they pressed on into the light of gospel truth. Driven from Paris by the Chancellor Duprât, and Bêda, syndic of the Sorbonne, at the instigation of the queen-mother, the profligate Louise of Savoy, they retired to Meaux, the city which for a time shone with the "sweet refreshing light" which the gospel shed upon it. But, alas! that light was quenched. Its bishop, Briçonnet, fell; his flock was scattered; the blood and ashes of martyrs stained the soil of France. For a few months Farel preached the Word in his native province, disowned and persecuted by his family, and then was forced to take refuge in Switzerland.

After a few years of exile and vicissitude, during which he had become acquainted with Erasmus and Zwingli, and had grown in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, Farel recommenced the work that had ended abruptly on the mountains of Dauphiné. On mountain-sides, under the open vault of heaven, on stones in village greens or the steps of market-crosses, as well as under the vaulted roofs of cathedrals and churches, he preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. His words were with power, and carried conviction to his hearers and confusion to his opponents. Multitudes believed as one man. At Aigle first, at Morat and Granson—the scene of the glorious triumphs of Swiss valour—and at Lausanne, the idols fell, the mass was abolished, the reform established. The people, long amused with shows and fed with chaff, everywhere eagerly received the Word of God.

With thankful hearts, Raymond and Madeline von Ohrendorf heard of the triumphs of the gospel in the neighbouring bailiwicks; and at last a letter from Emer Beynon, the pious priest of Serrière, a little village at the gates of Neufchâtel, whom Raymond had been the means of influencing in favour of the gospel, was sent to Vaudemont by a trusty messenger. It contained good news. Farel had arrived, and was about to preach to a vast congregation from the market-cross of Neufchâtel. Raymond at once mounted his horse and rode thither, to give countenance to this first effort to exalt Christ and him crucified in place of the fearfully corrupt form of Romanism which prevailed in that city and its dependencies. He found an immense crowd of citizens and peasants from the neighbouring districts hanging upon the wonderful words that fell from the preacher's fervent lips. In vain the monks strove to incite them to the deeds of brutal violence that were too often the portion of this faithful and fearless servant of God. "When God worketh, who can let it?" From that hour Popery was doomed in Neufchâtel. After sowing the seed of the Word there, Farel proceeded to scatter it in the bishopric of Basle.

The end of 1530 saw the reform established at Neufchâtel. The struggle had been violent, and more than once bloodshed seemed impending. In October, the images had been swept away by a whirlwind of fury that had seized upon the people. Thenceforth the pure teachings of the Word of God took their place in the minds and affections of the Neufchâtelans. On the 4th of November, Rome sustained her final defeat. In the Church of Our Lady, amidst the shattered wrecks of altars and images, in the presence of three deputies from Berne, (which state had faithfully used its influence to maintain the cause of truth in Neufchâtel and the neighbouring districts,) the people's votes were taken. The gospel triumphed; Rome fell. She meditated a terrible revenge. On Christmas Day, when the song of prayer and praise ascended from the churches, it was to be suddenly exchanged for shrieks of terror and anguish, succeeded by the stillness of death. The sword of steel was to undo the work of the sword of the Spirit. But God watched over his own. The fearful plot was discovered, and this mark of his fatherly care served to strengthen the hands of his people.

Among the most violent of the enemies of the gospel was the Lady Ermengarde's ancient friend, Guillemette de Vergy. She had in vain used all her influence to stem the tide of reform in Neufchâtel; and her rage knew no bounds when the intrepid Farel began the battle of Christ *versus* the Church in the towns and villages under her own jurisdiction. At length an act of impetuous daring on the part of a young kinsman and companion of Farel, brought both into her power. On the day of a great festival of the Virgin, while Farel was preaching with his usual vehemence and power in the church of a neighbouring village, young Anthony Boyve, seeing the priest at the altar raising the Host, and the congregation about to bow down before it as usual, sprang forward, rushed through the people, snatched the sacred Host from the hands of the astounded priest, and turning to the people, exclaimed, "This is not the God whom you should worship! He is above—in heaven—in

the majesty of the Father—and not, as you believe, in the hands of the priest!” And Farel, taking advantage of the calm produced by the shock, with power proclaimed a risen, exalted Christ, as alone Saviour and alone Mediator.

The priests recovered from their panic ; the tocsin was rung ; Farel and Boyve with difficulty escaped into the forests. But as they were passing through a narrow path near the Castle of Vallangin they were discovered, a number of priests and others fell upon them and beat them with sticks and stones, while the aged Countess Guillemette, standing on the terrace of the castle, urged them on to still greater violence, and bade them throw the “Lutheran dogs” into the roaring torrent below. But for the opportune arrival of several persons from Neufchâtel, Farel’s ministry would doubtless have ended then. At their intercession, the prisoners, bleeding and covered with mud, were carried into the castle, where, on their refusal to kneel before the image of the Virgin, they were so severely beaten that the chapel was stained with their blood. Exhausted and almost lifeless, they were thrown into the dungeon of the castle ; but at the demand of the townsmen of Neufchâtel, and in fear of the anger of Berne, Madame de Vergy was constrained to release them ; and they thus escaped a terrible death. Nothing daunted by their adversaries, they “went everywhere, preaching the Word.” And the truth was finally victorious in Vallangin itself, and in the neighbouring districts.

In the little church of Vaudemont, the gospel had long been preached and the mass abolished. Most of the domestics of the castle had received the truth, and such as had not were free to attend the neighbouring churches where the old forms were maintained. Well the Baron von Ohrendorf knew it is not by compulsion and human authority hearts are won to Christ. Father Joseph had died, and his place was supplied by one of the many monks who, casting off the trammels of monastic observances, had come out into the world to hold forth the Word of Life in the pulpit, and to show its power in the sancti-

fied influence of a holy Christian home. A similar course had been pursued at Ohrendorf, where they had spent part of each year since their marriage.

But Madeline loved best the old Castle of Vaudemont, with its thrilling memories and tender associations. There her children had all been born, and there her home affections centred. And there the month of March 1531 found her, and consequently her husband.

Very even and bright had been the course of their married life. The shadows that had occasionally crossed it had all been from without; and the deep, tender, human love that had come to her as a Father's most precious gift, had grown in depth and intensity with the years that had passed. Lady Ermengarde had cause to bless the day when the gentle burgher maiden crossed the threshold of her home, not only for the sweet atmosphere of love and peace and purity her presence diffused, but for the light which had at last struggled through mists and perplexities and prejudices, and illumined her own heart.

It was a bright March afternoon; the last strips of snow had disappeared from the valleys, the first promise of spring appeared on the mountain-sides, the waters flashed and sparkled in the sunlight, the birds trilled forth their glad songs. In the sheltered terrace-garden, under the overhanging mountain-side, the young Baroness von Ohrendorf was pacing with her husband and a stranger in the plain garb of a Reformed pastor, at once listening to their conversation, and watching, with a mother's tender pride, the gambols of her two brave boys, Theodore and Raymond, while her loving little Constance walked beside her, clinging to her hand. The sweet face, with its broad, calm brow, and soft earnest eyes, was little changed; but there was a matronly grace in the rounded figure, and a quiet dignity in the mien, that well became her at once as wife and mother, and as the Lady of Ohrendorf. Her hand rested confidently on her husband's arm, and her loving eyes met his ever and anon with a look full of sympathy and comprehension.

A great contrast to the young Baron's stately figure was presented by the stranger's aspect. A small, frail-looking man, with matted red beard, and pale, worn face, bronzed as by long exposure to sun and weather, and lighted up with dark eyes of extraordinary fire and vivacity. One arm was bandaged and bound against his breast, and his face bore marks of recent blows.

It was William Farel, the apostolic evangelist of Switzerland, but lately beaten and bruised within an inch of his life by the populace of St. Blaise, stirred up by the priests and the governor, and then regaining strength for a fresh campaign under the hospitable roof of Vaudemont. The feeble step and sunken cheek told of exhaustion and suffering of body; the sparkling eye and expressive mouth of a power within that triumphed over both. And this power was evinced even then in the earnest zeal and faith of the words he was speaking.

"The work is God's," he said; "it must triumph. What if the standard-bearers fall!—their bodies will be stepping-stones over which others will press on to victory. Care? God will take care of his own. Our care must be to do his bidding. We are bold, we are rash, you say; so was Paul at Athens. If we fall, who will take our place, you ask, and rescue perishing souls from the snares of the false priests of a false faith who murder them? My friends, the gospel will prevail by its own divine power. What are blows and insults, even death itself? Hath not He who died and is alive again said, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do'? Oh, my friends! hold me not back; souls are perishing in heathen darkness, bowing down to stocks and stones, while Christ, the risen Saviour, is crying, 'Behold ME! behold ME!' While these limbs have strength to bear about the treasure God has given me in the frail earthen vessel of this feeble body, I will never sit down in sloth. To-morrow I must sound the trumpet of the gospel among these mountains once more."

These words were spoken in answer to the general tenor of the past conversation, and to Madeline's gentle pleading that he would remain with them a day or two longer at least, ere he sallied forth to encounter new dangers, and perhaps new violence.

Just at that moment little Theodore, who had been for some minutes gazing intently from the southern terrace, which commanded the wide sweep of view in front of the castle, came running up to his father, exclaiming, "Father, father! there is the noble knight of whom thou and my mother were talking, riding hither. Come, see if it be not so!" and he seized his father's hand.

Madeline turned pale, and her husband pressed her hand closer to his side as they walked hastily to the edge of the terrace.

A horseman was indeed urging his wearied steed rapidly along the road that wound towards the foot of the slopes leading to Vaudemont. One moment Raymond's quick eye was fixed upon the rider, then turning to Madeline, he said, "It is he; thank God!"

The eyes of husband and wife met. Raymond's gaze was sad and perturbed; Madeline's veiled in tears. Farel had turned into a distant path; the children had bounded away to meet their nurse, who appeared with an infant in her arms. Raymond drew his wife to his breast, where she hid her face with a wailing cry. "Oh, Raymond! it is so sad; and we are so happy!"

"My dearest," he answered tenderly, "the sorrow is well-nigh ended; the joy has begun even now." But his voice was unsteady, and he said no more.

For a moment they stood thus, heart beating to heart, in a communion that sweetened the first deep sorrow they had shared together. But the horseman was even then nearing the castle; so Raymond said, "Thou wilt prepare her for his coming, my Madeline, while I receive him. God strengthen

both for the meeting,—and for the parting,” he added, in a lower tone.

Then he turned through an arched gateway into the court, and Madeline slowly, with bowed head and clasped hands, entered the castle, and sought the chamber on which the thoughts and the cares of the whole household were concentrated, in which a precious fading life seemed passing peacefully away. For there, in her own old familiar room, lay the fragile, wasted form of Muriel von Ohrendorf.

CHAPTER XLI.

A LESSON LEARNED AT LAST.

" We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbours or our work farewell ;
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

" The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask,—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."—KEBLE.



THREE months before there had come to Vaudemont one of the many ex-monks who, having neither the gift nor knowledge of the Scriptures requisite for preaching the Word of God, contented themselves by spreading the truths of that Word contained in the writings of Luther, Zwingle, and others, often at the cost of violence and abuse, sometimes even of life itself. He was the bearer of a letter containing a few feeble lines in Muriel's handwriting, pleading for forgiveness, and for the love she had once given up for ever.

" Mother, brother, sister," she wrote, " God has opened my eyes. I see now—his face in that of Jesus Christ. A sick, helpless, perhaps dying fugitive, the hope of seeing your dear faces one more, and of receiving the forgiveness my heart has pined and thirsted for so long, has almost died away ;—unless, indeed, like Him whom in my pride and blindness I had wronged and grieved so long, you will come to me where I am. Jesus did it.

"I thought to reach Vaudemont, but my strength has failed me. I have fled from the convent in which I have long worn bonds for Him. For Christ and his gospel—I, even I.

"Mother, my own mother, Raymond, Madeline, forgive me, love me, take me to your hearts and home, prays your own Muriel."

From the book-hawker they learned that Muriel was lying ill at a village on the shores of the lake of Bienne. It was the afternoon of a dark, stormy, wintry day; the snow lay thick upon the road, and a bitter wind swept down the mountain-sides, but the weak, timid, fanciful Lady Ermengarde, who rarely quitted the shelter of the castle-walls during the cold winter months, forgot self in the unutterable yearning of a mother's mighty love, and would brook no delay. They set forth, she and Raymond, in a carriage procured from Vallangin, just as the night-shadows began to gather over the mountains and in the dark pine-forests. One thought alone possessed her mind. Her Muriel, her own, her beautiful, her long-lost Muriel, was lying, helpless and suffering, among rude, careless strangers, hungering for a sight of the face that had bent over her cradle, yearning to be folded once more to a mother's loving heart. The rough road and the dark night had no terrors for her; had the weary miles been a thousand instead of scarcely twelve, she would not have shrunk from the journey.

And Madeline, left alone with old Theresa and her newly-born babe, listened to the wailing of the night wind round the castle, and the roaring of the torrent in the gorge, with a heart in which joy and hope and fear mingled in one ceaseless pulse of prayer.

Ere the day broke, Muriel's fevered head was pillowed on her mother's breast, while her burning, wasted hands lay in her brother's loving clasp. Loving eyes, and dear familiar voices, and tender, well-known touches were around her, but they could not avert the fell progress of disease. Days grew into weeks, and Madeline had bent unrecognized over her, ere the

fever abated, and the worn and wasted sufferer could be moved from the wretched room of the village inn, and borne on a litter to the beloved home, to which her heart turned with all an invalid's sick longing.

In those days of delirium much of the past was unveiled, but it was not until the journey to Vaudemont had been accomplished that they learned all the story of the past nine years. In the deep sweet consciousness of the overshadowing, all-infolding love of Christ, Muriel rested now ; all that had been dark was light, all that had been confused was clear. The feet of the Good Shepherd had indeed followed the wandering sheep into the very den of the wolf ; amidst the dark mountains, his voice, and not a hireling's, had reached her heart at last ; borne upon his shoulder, her weary struggling was over. And as a subdued, forgiven child, takes meekly, gratefully back the cherished treasure flung aside in sullenness, or petulance, or pride, from a father's loving, indulgent hand, so Muriel took back the precious human love she had once renounced for ever.

This was her story, told by degrees in broken snatches,—here a light and there a shadow, here an incident and there a short full sentence eloquent with the history of months or years, all now read alike in the light of that vast, all-pervading love, in which all earthly affections were hallowed and purified :—

Agnes had long made preparations for the flight to which she had never ceased to urge Muriel, and the night in which they left Vaudemont they had found horses and an ecclesiastic awaiting them at the bottom of the steep path down which they had scrambled. Ere daybreak they had reached the Convent of St. Catherine, near Soleure, exhausted with fatigue. The great gates opened and closed upon them, and Muriel deemed the victory won. For a time her mind continued in a state of high-wrought fervour and exaltation. Resolutely refusing any communication from without, and bending all her energies to the numerous duties and services required of her, her spirit was wrought up into a kind of ecstatic enthusiasm, which she mistook for God's

seal upon her vocation. Then the irrevocable step *had been* taken. It is true no vow could bind her for a year to come, but at her first arrival she had proceeded to the chapel, and there, prostrate before the altar, had solemnly renounced the world and earthly interests and affections; and the reaction, after a period of such terrible tension, produced a calm which she mistook for the longed-for peace. There was everything around her to work upon her fervid imagination,—miraculous images, and pathetic pictures, and holy relics, and thrilling legends, and soul-stirring music, and melting strains of low sweet voices, and gorgeous ceremonial,—all Rome's opiates to lull the soul to the lethargic torpor she calls peace and the odour of sanctity. The convent was a large and important one, the abbess a woman of sincere though totally unenlightened piety, and the fame of Muriel's sacrifice of all the seductions the world could offer spread among the numerous nuns. Already she was revered as an embryo saint, and—Muriel's heart was human, and therefore vain—this also acted as a stimulant. In the ceaseless round of forms and prayers, and services and devotions, enforced and voluntary, she strove to crush down the earthly memories that would rise. And for a time she succeeded, or persuaded herself she did. The echoes of the beloved voices without were growing fainter and fainter; soon, she prayed and hoped, would they be gone altogether.

This went on for months, and then suddenly the reaction set in. The old conflict began again, only then it was rather with the shadows of a past life that she seemed to wrestle than with existing realities. For with the irrevocable vow she had ere then taken, that life was dead to her and she to it. Unutterable longings for her beloved ones, anguish for their sorrow, cravings for their love, jealousy of their forgetfulness, awoke once more in her soul. In vain with terror and dismay she sought to wrestle them down. Slight, trivial things, such as a familiar flower in the convent garden, the song of a bird, the low sigh of a scented breeze, opened the sluices of her soul.

The tidings of the marriage of Raymond and Madeline reached her. From that day Nature reasserted all her power. Yet, terrified at the weakness of her own heart, she still steadily refused all communication with her friends.

Then the pious Abbess Hilda died, and her successor wrought great changes. Laxity and indulgence were introduced with bigotry and intolerance. Muriel awoke to the bitter knowledge that the tearing asunder of her heart-strings had been all in vain ; for that heart in the cloister's seclusion was the same restless, passionate, tempest-tossed thing, as full of earthly feelings and human affections, and as cold and unresponsive to God, as it had been in her natural home ; and that the convent itself was but a world in miniature, a little, narrow, selfish, fretting world, in which, as in the great wide sinful world without, *self* was the guiding principle—self as opposed to God.

Darker and darker grew Muriel's soul through seven of those weary years. Vain had been her struggles for deliverance from the evil of her own heart. What she had fled from had followed her. And then, as tidings of the spread of the gospel came from without, arose the terrible fear whether she had not grasped the shadow and lost the substance.

But the gospel seed sown in her heart by Madeline, years before, had been choked and crushed down, not destroyed ; for in it was the germ of imperishable life. And that blessed Spirit, whose office is not only to teach us all things, but to bring all things to our remembrance whatsoever he has said unto us, brooded dove-like over that lonely, despairing heart, clearing away the rank growth of error and superstition, and watering that dormant seed till it sprang up into vigorous growth. With no outward help save through the fragments of truth that gleamed, like gems among the ashes of a burned palace, in the ritual of the daily services, and in the symbols to which the living words he recalled gave meaning and light, he led her at last, bruised and faint and broken-hearted, to the foot of the cross. And further still, to the other side of the

empty sepulchre that had once held the bleeding victim upon whom God had laid the sins of the world. For one Easter morning, when the words, "He is not here; he is risen," were chanted in the choir, a flood of glorious dazzling light poured into her soul. Thenceforth she could look up from a blood-stained cross and an empty grave, to a risen, living Saviour.

Silently, in the depths of her own spirit, had this change been wrought; but Christ, actually dwelling in a human soul, can no more be hid than his bodily presence could of old in the house on the borders of Tyre and Sidon. Muriel began to speak of him to the sisters. The struggle between the Gospel and Popery was then at its height in Soleure. Philip Grotz of Zug was preaching Christ there, and the minds of the Romish party were irritated to the highest degree by the successes of the reform. The ecclesiastical superiors of the Convent of St. Catherine and its abbess were among its most bitter opponents.

One day soon after that blessed Easter morning, Muriel, walking alone in a retired path under the wall of the spacious and beautiful convent-garden, saw a book lying open on the path, as if it had been thrown over the high wall. It was Luther's German Testament. She had only just time to secrete the precious volume in the folds of her sleeve when two of the nuns most opposed to the gospel came up. Day and night in the solitude of her cell she searched into the "statutes of life;" and thus, with no human teacher, was brought out into the full liberty of Christ.

Then came bitter, cruel persecution. Questioned by her superiors, she meekly but fearlessly confessed Christ and his gospel. Her precious Testament was taken from her; she was forbidden to speak to the sisters, and finally imprisoned for ten weary months in a retired cell, often deprived of the bare necessities of life. But her faith stood firm. "In my blind pride and folly," she said, "I took up a cross of my own making, my own choosing, only to learn by bitter failure how wholly unfit I was

to bear it. Christ laid one on me, from which I shrank with agony and fear, and I sank not. For it was of his giving, and when he gives the cross, he gives also the strength to bear it."

All the threats of Rome were powerless to shake the trust of a soul stayed wholly upon Christ. And in that prison-cell, under the Church's anathema, her soul shook off Rome's unholy trammels entirely, finally. The words of the book they had taken from her were written in living letters upon her heart. And new and deeper meaning shone out in them daily. "I saw at last," she said, "that it was not on God's altar, but on man's, I had laid the unholy sacrifice of the affections and duties his Word sanctions and hallows. In that Word I had found precepts for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, parents and children, maidens and widows, masters and servants, but none for monks or nuns; holy rules for social and family life, none for that of the cloister. No other sphere is thus ignored in the book that so marvellously, so divinely fits into every human need. And the meaning of this grew clear to me. I saw that it is not by wrenching our affections and our lives from the sphere in which he has placed them, but by surrendering those affections and those lives simply, unreservedly into his hands to do with as he wills, that God is honoured and obeyed. His call to us is not to give up, but to take; not to act, and choose, and fight, but to *yield ourselves as we are*, and *where we are*, to him who has bought us with his own blood. Not in our anguish, our loss, our self-willed offerings and self-imposed crosses, does the love of his heart find pleasure; but in our joy, our gain, our trustful obedience,—not only in the storms and shadows, but also in the sunshine of earth. Each is equally of him and ordered by him.

"I saw this, and then my long-burdened heart cast off its galling chains, and, sitting at the feet of Jesus, I looked up into his loving eyes, and heard his voice saying, 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.'"

From that time bolts and bars, not a vow opposed to God's will and word, kept Muriel from her home. Her heart yearned to the beloved ones whom she had so cruelly wounded and wronged ; but her own hand had long ago cut off any chance of deliverance by refusing to hold communication with her friends, who were of course wholly ignorant of all that was befalling her.

Yet deliverance came. An aged lay-sister, who was stone-deaf, and had therefore been appointed to bring Muriel the bread and water that had long been the only sustenance allowed her, one night entered her cell bringing with her a peasant's coarse dress, with a large cloak and hood, which she bade her put on. She then led the way to a postern-gate of the convent, and unlocking it, bade Muriel fly. "I am deaf," she said, "but I can see. Such faith and patience as thine can but be of God. And worse trials await thee if thou remainest here. In freeing thee from thy cruel persecutors, I can but please Him who prayed for His on the cross." And before Muriel could recover from her surprise, she had gently pushed her through the door and turned the key within.

Trembling and bewildered, and feeble with long privation, Muriel's courage would doubtless have failed her but for the voice that almost audibly, it seemed, spoke the words, "Fear not ; I am with thee. I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee." That promise had been her stay and experience throughout her flight.

The gospel had been banished from Soleure itself, but in the canton the majority of the people had embraced it. God had guided Muriel to the house of a lowly but faithful believer in Christ, in the village of Zuchswyl, on the night of her escape, and there she had remained concealed for a few days, until the search for her was discontinued. Then she had made her way on foot, and through a severe snow-storm, under the guidance of the Christian book-hawker, across the mountains to Bienne, where the agitation of her mind, fatigue, and exposure had

brought on the illness from which all human skill and tenderness was failing to restore her. The fever had passed, and for a time it had seemed as if strength were returning. But as week after week went by, and no change came, hope died away in the loving hearts of Madeline and Raymond. It appeared as though she had but reached her earthly home to wait there, peacefully, and even joyfully, for the summons to the brighter one above. But Lady Ermengarde and old Theresa, who, bowed under the weight of more than ninety years, had at last tremblingly laid hold of Jesus, refused to believe she could be passing from earth.

Of Guy de Montmédi Muriel rarely spoke, and her friends shrunk from the mention of a name with which so much of pain was linked. But as the conviction grew upon Raymond and Madeline that this sickness was indeed unto death, they questioned anxiously whether they should not summon him of whose unchanged affection they were well assured, to share with them the last sad watch of love. And one day, when Madeline alone was with her, Muriel said suddenly, "Madeline, tell me all thou knowest of *him*."

And Madeline told her of the restless, troubled life, of the gradual imbittering of the noble spirit in the heat of controversy and the rancour of party strife; of the fiery words and deeds, prompted by bitter hatred and indignation against Rome, which had led to the dungeons of the Sorbonne; of the zeal for the cause for which his life was spent, that had driven him an exile from his country.

"And that cause?" Muriel asked. "Tell me, Madeline. Is it the faith of Christ, or the downfall of Rome? Alas! too well I know it is the latter. And this is my work, Madeline. I must see him once ere I die. Such reparation as is in my power I must make. From the ruins of the past God may make a noble future yet."

"Thou lovest him still, Muriel?" Madeline asked.

A faint flush rose to the transparent brow, as she answered,

"Yes, Madeline, but with a calmly chastened heart. And his life must no longer be blighted for my sake. But oh ! Madeline, what we sow we must reap."

At her request Raymond had despatched a messenger to Basle, where he had heard by accident that Guy de Montmédi, who was ignorant of Muriel's return to her family, had arrived a short time before. And it was his prompt arrival that had so agitated Madeline. How their fragile Muriel would sustain that interview ; how Guy would bear the renewed anguish of separation—were anxious questionings. And the contrast between her own happy lot and their sadly-severed lives filled her heart at once with gratitude and grief.

For a moment she paused at the door, and then entered the room where, on a couch propped up with pillows, Muriel lay. Her face, wasted and worn as it was, retained its old loveliness ; and the short golden locks clustering round her pure, transparent brow, and the happy, loving light that beamed from the dark, beautiful eyes, and round the sweet, smiling lips, gave a look of extreme youthfulness to the whole countenance. Beside her, with a look of placid content on her round, fair face, sat her mother, still unable to take in any other thought than that her child's love and presence were restored to her.

Muriel turned to Madeline with a gentle chiding for having returned so soon ; but as Madeline sat down beside her, not daring to speak, lest the agitation of her voice should betray her, the truth flashed upon Muriel. "*He* is come," she said quietly ; "even this wish granted !"

She covered her face with her hands for a few moments, while Lady Ermengarde and Madeline sat in anxious silence, and then looking up with a steady light in her eye, said, "Mother, Madeline, I would be alone with God. Leave me, and when I ring, bring him to me."

And when at last, after what appeared an age of waiting to the throbbing heart below, that summons came, and Madeline, accompanied by a bronzed and bearded man, on whose worn

face and thoughtful brow the traces of grief and suffering were deeply stamped, re-entered Muriel's room, there was a solemn calm on the pale, sweet countenance, which the changed aspect of the face and form she had last seen radiant with youth and happiness did not disturb. She held out her hand ; but as Guy folded her to his breast, murmuring, in those low, deep tones that come from the inmost heart, "My Muriel, my Muriel ! God has given thee back to me ! Not for death, but for life !" Madeline left them alone.

What passed in that interview, which won Muriel back to life, and brought Guy's long-darkened spirit into the light of God, none ever knew. But when at last, fearing for the consequence of such long-protracted agitation on Muriel's fragile frame, Madeline returned to the room, she found her lying calmly back on her pillows, with her hand in Guy's, and her sweet eyes shining with the light that had filled them that bright June evening long ago, when first their troth was plighted.

"I think he is right, Madeline," she said. "I think God has given us back to each other."

And it was even so. Muriel von Ohrendorf did not die. From that day her strength returned ; and when the May blossoms were filling the air with fragrance, she and Guy de Montmédi pledged their solemn troth-plight before the beloved ones on whose sunny pathway of happy love their severed, blighted lives, had cast so deep a shadow, and in the felt, acknowledged presence of Him whose bodily presence once blessed an earthly bridal-feast.

CHAPTER XLII.

A NIGHT OF TERROR.

" Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress ;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated."—BYRON.



THE thick darkness of a stormy October night rests upon the city of Zurich. The wind sweeps fitfully down through the mountain gullies and over the tossing waters of the lake, now with a wild, shrieking wail, now with a low, sobbing moan. In its pauses the low muttering of thunder-peals is heard, and the lurid flash of lightning breaks the pitchy gloom. The very earth has shared the agitation of its kindred elements, and shaken hill and valley with its shuddering throes.

But these terrors are not all. From every tower and steeple in Zurich the tocsin is pealing ; the clang of arms and trampling of steeds, the roll of drums and the peal of bugles, fill the streets ; while the red glare of torches and the lightning's pale gleam reveal groups of terror-stricken citizens and hastily-gathering bands of armed men.

In the houses even sadder sights are seen : terrified children, roused from their slumbers, clinging to the breasts of weeping mothers ; agonized partings between pale, anxious-faced men, and heart-stricken women, too many of which will be followed

by no meeting. The banner of war is unfurled, the sword of the Waldstettes is unsheathed.

The storm has been gathering for months. Zwingle, seeing in the threatening attitude of the Waldstettes, and the menaced interposition of Austria and Rome, a danger to the gospel and to the state that could only be averted by prompt action, called vigorously for war. "We must strike," he said, "or we shall be stricken." As a patriot, a politician, after-events proved him to have been indisputably right; as a Christian, how sadly, fatally wrong!

Throughout the city and canton of Zurich his words passed like an electric shock, striking out answering enthusiasm; but the other evangelical states hung back. The great cantons of Berne and Basle sought to establish peace; yet a measure proposed by Berne at the Diet of Arau tended more than all else to precipitate the impending catastrophe. Urging the dangers from without and within that threatened, the sorrow and shame of shedding their brethren's blood, the want and misery war would bring, the Bernese deputies proposed to close their markets against the Waldstettes, and refuse to sell them the necessaries of life—corn, salt, wine, steel, and iron, until they consented to allow the free preaching of the Word of God. Zwingle's clear head and tender heart alike revolted against this unjust and arbitrary proposal. But all his representations were vain; the edict was passed. All roads were stopped, the most unfrequented mountain-passes guarded, and a district already afflicted by God with dearth and the ravages of a terrible disease was reduced by man to absolute famine. A cry of anguish went up to heaven, not only from the guilty, but from the innocent, from the secret partisans of the gospel, from unoffending women and helpless children.

"Permit the free preaching of the Word of God and we will raise the blockade," said the reformed cantons.

"We will listen to no proposal till the blockade is raised," answered the Waldstettes.

A Diet sat at Bremgarten in June, July, and August, but both parties were firm. The breach deepened and widened. The blending of politics and religion had formed a knot the sword alone could sever. And then, when the die was cast, Zurich recoiled before the coming storm ; the burning words of Zwingle lost their power ; disunion and indecision prevailed in the councils ; the friends of reform drew back in alarm, many altogether abandoned the cause ; and the enemies of the gospel again raised their voices, and accused Zwingle of being the cause of all the disasters with which the country was threatened.

Incessant rumours of war came from the oppressed and indignant Waldstettes ; panic-terrors filled the hearts of the people. Fearful sights were seen,—aërial combatants and flaming swords and waving banners in the clouds, and blood springing from the earth. Strange sounds were heard in the air. Everywhere dismay, consternation, and presentiment of some terrible catastrophe prevailed.

Amidst all this Zwingle remained calm, unshaken. His heart was fixed, trusting in God.

And yet that heart was well-nigh broken ! Forsaken and reproached by friends, reviled by enemies, distrusted by the people, disregarded by the council, which yet refused to accept his resignation, foreseeing terrible calamities looming in the distance, he still preserved that lofty composure of mind and heroic meekness of spirit by which he had ever been distinguished. Fully persuaded in his own mind that the battle was the Lord's, and himself an appointed standard-bearer, he stood forth, strong in faith, prepared for the conflict whatever the issue might be. Truth was at stake—the gospel he had preached so long and faithfully, the liberty of the country he so ardently loved. The glory of Christ and the freedom of that country were inextricably blended in his mind. And this confusion led to the blood-stained field of Cappel. Zwingle saw not, alas ! that he himself was acting in direct opposition to the plain teachings of that Word of God for the free preaching of which

he contended, for the maintenance of the full authority of which he had long been ready to die. Truly we see through a glass darkly.

Thus with breaking yet faith-stayed heart, with troubled yet heroic spirit, Ulric Zwingle advanced with steady step along the by-way into which he had turned from the King's highway of righteousness and peace, along which no warriors trusting in earthly mail should pass.

He was not untouched by the superstitions of his age. One night, standing with a friend in the cathedral cemetery, he pointed to a comet, whose lurid glow and gigantic size filled all hearts with apprehension and alarm. "This ominous globe," he said, "is come to light the path that leads me to my grave."

Mournful foreboding—true, and yet untrue. No grave was ever dug for Ulric Zwingle.

The storm broke at last. The Waldstettes assembled in Diet at Lucerne declared for war. All attempts at mediation failed; already a body of the Pope's mercenaries were on the march to join the enemies of reform. The danger was imminent and pressing. Yet a spirit of infatuation seemed to have seized upon Zurich. Of her it might perhaps be said, as of Israel of old, "The Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep; he hath closed your eyes." No preparations were made, and on the night of which we write it was already too late. For days past message after message had been received, warning the Zurichers that the deceitful quiet that had followed the declaration of the Diet at Lucerne would soon be broken by the trumpet-peal of war at their very gates. The council refused to believe it, or saw in these reports only the machinations of the enemy. Even Zwingle himself appears to have been deceived.

But at last came a day of utter consternation, followed by a night of still greater terror. Messenger after messenger dashes pale and breathless into the city. The army of the Waldstettes has entered the canton, has seized the village of Hitzkylch; three leagues only lie between Zurich and the foe! The tocsin is at

once sounded, and a body of men despatched to Cappel, the point where the Zurich territory would be first entered. But all is confusion and dismay.

Day dawns at last. Bodies of men have marched off during the night ; seven hundred more have been gathered under arms. Before the town-house the banner of Zurich is raised, but its massive folds hang drooping round its staff. Beneath it are assembled a disorderly mass of citizens, without uniform, almost without arms. Friends of the reform who have hitherto hung back, now come forward and take their places in the ranks. Among them is Gerold von Knonau. He had only been withheld from setting out before by the agonized grief of his darling wife. But at last, at last the farewell has been spoken, the last kiss has been pressed on the pale, quivering lips, the clinging arms have relaxed their hold ; Gerold has laid her fainting in Paul's arms, and, not daring to trust himself to glance again at her or at the sleeping babe in the cradle, has rushed forth, and is seeking with all the impassioned fervour of a young and faithful spirit to rouse the drooping hearts of the people, and gather them at once round the banner of Zurich and of the truth. From post to post he passes, rousing, urging, entreating. "For the gospel—for your liberties—for your homes !" he cries, "men of Zurich ! The cause is God's. He will defend it ! It is nothing to him to save with many or with few !"

And these are not words only. Amidst the bowed heads and pallid faces around, his noble figure towers, and his young and beautiful face glows with enthusiastic faith. Many a wavering heart is thrilled by that young, earnest voice ; many a craven spirit shamed by the mingled fire of faith and patriotism that shines in those bright, flashing eyes.

Beneath that banner, halberd in hand, stands also Friedel Reinhardt. His face is grave and sad, but his bearing is resolute and calm. It is with reluctant hand he has grasped the sword in defence of all he holds dear. Max has already set forth with one of the earlier contingents.

Courier after courier dashes into the city with urgent requests that relief may be sent to the troops posted at Cappel, every hour in expectation of being attacked by the enemy. The usual oath has not been administered, and still there is delay.

At length an excited, agitated crowd, rather than army, presses out at the gates of the city. Citizens, peasants, pastors, students, councillors, form it, marching without order—without officers. Among them, armed as a chaplain of the confederation, rides Ulric Zwingle. The council has called upon him to attend the army, and he has at once obeyed. With the high, heroic calm of a martyr going to the stake, he has bidden a last farewell to the friends who pressed round him, embraced his weeping wife, and given a father's tender kiss and last solemn blessing to the three little children, Wilhelm, Regula, and Ulric, who, too young to comprehend, are yet old enough to be affected by, the grief and dismay around them, and cling to his knees and his dress. As he laid his hand on the horse which stood ready caparisoned at the door, the animal sprang back as in terror; and when with difficulty he gained the saddle, it refused to move, and continued prancing and backing for some moments. An evil omen, which materially increased the alarm and distress of his friends.

With settled face, and sad but steadfast eyes, Ulric Zwingle left the walls of Zurich, knowing well that he should return to them no more, or to those beloved ones from whom his bleeding heart-strings had just been torn violently away.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CAPPEL.

"A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction."—JER. l. 22.



ONWARD they press, that sad, tumultuous throng, bearing in their midst the drooping folds of the banner of a hundred fields. Alas for the lion of Zurich, that fatal day!

In the villages through which they pass, pale, terrified, weeping groups gaze mournfully upon the feeble defenders that alone stand between them and an angry, vindictive foe. No thrilling strains of martial music rouse the burdened hearts that follow that standard—mournfully, silently, as to the scaffold or the stake. Heads are bowed, and pale lips firmly set, and stern, sad eyes downcast. Behind are hearts and homes—before are blood and death—above are clouds and darkness.

This last to most. But in some clear, upraised eyes, the eagle-glance of faith pierces through the gloom, and sees, above, the unchanged, unchanging presence of One who in wrath ever remembers mercy, who chastens but never forsakes, whose love is everlasting, over-sweeping and effacing the errors of human frailty as the mighty ocean-waves the sand-bank raised by a child's puny hands to stem its resistless tide. They know that the cause is God's. If man, in raising his weak hand to defend it, with the unproved weapons of carnal confidence, has erred and presumed, he will defend his own.

And if they fall, if the sword of the confederates and the soil of their own beloved land drink in their life-blood, God's truth cannot fall with them, for it is like himself, divine, imperishable.

Some feel thus, while a few, such as Gerold von Knonau, march forward, strong in the faith of a mighty cause upheld by the power of an invisible arm, which will make five of their feeble host chase an hundred, and an hundred put ten thousand to flight.

And Ulric Zwingle—what of him? Those who look to see how he bears himself in that hour of terror and dismay, see a pale, sad, steadfast face, with solemn, mournful eyes raised, like his stricken, agonized heart, upward, heavenward; those who ride near him hear that great heart, and noble, misguided spirit, vent their utter anguish in groans and sighs, and low-breathed, fervent prayers; those who speak to him hear the voice which has roused Switzerland from the sleep of death, and made her hills and valleys re-echo with the glad tidings of a free salvation, breathe holy, steadfast words of unshaken faith and trust.

And yet no false hope cheered him. He sought not to conceal the prophetic bodings that filled his soul. The language of his heart was that of the patriarch of old, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

On they pass, up the wooded steep of the Albis, the old and the feeble dropping exhausted under the unwonted toil and the burden of their heavy armour. The thin ranks have grown thinner still ere they reach the top of the pine-clad hill. There they pause. Behind them, beyond a wide expanse of fair fields and orchards and vineyards, in its rich setting of many-hued woods and verdant meadows and blue shining waters, lies the city from which the cries of terror and despair, mingling with the tears of affection and the prayers of faith, are rising to the ears that are never closed to such sounds; before them, deep in the wooded valley round the old Cistercian monastery of

Cappel, are the serried ranks of the foe, marshalled in array against the little band of Zurichers.

Again the message, "Hasten forward!" that express after express has borne to them as they have toiled up the hill, is urged upon them by pale, panting messengers, backed now by a voice that reaches every heart—the peal of cannon.

Onward they press once more,—down the wooded slopes that lead to the battle-field.

The golden rays of the sinking sun are flashing back from sword and helm on the wooded heights of Cappel; and the peaceful calm of the fair October evening is broken by the boom of cannon, the roar of artillery, the crashing of weapons, and the shouts of war. Everywhere the men of Zurich, fighting with the desperate energy of despair, are overborne by the exulting hosts of the Waldstettes. The swords of the latter, long sold to the stranger, are turned against the breasts of their brethren. Never have they been wielded with such an energy of hatred and resolve—never have they reaped so fruitful a harvest of blood and death.

Round the sinking banner of Zurich the bravest rally. In vain; the earth drinks in the blood of the truest and noblest, a panic-terror spreads through the ranks—the men of Zurich, once the foremost in the fight, fly before the foe!

In the foremost ranks, fighting almost single-handed against an overwhelming number of the enemy, is Gerold von Knonau. Surrounded on every side, the fire of high resolve is shining still in his steadfast eye. Recognized by some of the countrymen with whom he fought, they would fain save a life so full of promise. "Surrender," they cry, "and your life will be spared!" But the spirit of his ancestors is awake in that young breast. "It is better for me to die with honour than to yield with disgrace," he answers, and falls within sight of the ancient castle of his forefathers.

The tide of battle sweeps on over the prostrate form; it

ebbs ; and there, touched with a solemn radiance by the lingering sunbeams, lies the beautiful upturned face, and the deep, earnest eyes, from which the light has gone for ever.

Hotter, fiercer waxes the strife, greater the confusion, swifter the flight. The banner of Zurich is lowered ; its gallant defender, the aged and noble Banneret Schweitzer, is slain ; it is on the point of being captured by the foe !

Amidst this scene of terror and dismay one man stands calm and motionless, a warrior's helmet on his head, but with the sword hanging useless at his side, his hand grasping his unstained halberd, his eyes now gazing mournfully around, now raised with mingled anguish and submission to the God in whom is his trust. The weapon called "all-prayer" was the only one used by Ulric Zwingle that sad, disastrous day.

As he stands there, calm, unmoved by craven fear, yet torn with bitter heart-anguish, a low groan of pain falls upon his ear. Stretched on the earth, a few paces from him, lies a soldier of Zurich. Instantly the Christian, the pastor, wakes in Zwingle's heart ; he goes towards the sufferer amidst a storm of bullets and stones. Bending over him, with words of holy cheering upon his lips, he starts to recognize in the pale, rigid features, blanched with the death-agony, the familiar face of Max Reinhardt. The ground is steeped with the life-blood that issues in torrents from his side, the icy hand of death lies cold and heavy on his breast, but the parting spirit looks up with wistful anguish through the dim haze that is gathering over those once sunny blue eyes.

"Fear not," Zwingle says ; "He for whose truth thou diest died first for thee." But even as he speaks, a stone thrown with great violence by the hand of a man of the Waldstettes, strikes him violently upon the temple, and hurls him senseless to the earth.

When consciousness returns, and wounded and bleeding he again bends over Max, he meets no answering light in those veiled eyes. The spirit is gone. Whether he for whose truth

and doctrine Max had contended in life had revealed himself to his troubled spirit in that awful hour, is known only to Him to whom the secret things belong.

Again Zwingli falls and rises—again—and yet again. The shield of faith is not proof against the blows of the sword of steel, but it robs them of their triumph and their terror. Mortally wounded by a lance-thrust, Zwingli staggers, sinks upon his knees, and ere he falls back on the earth already crimsoned with the blood from his numerous wounds, says calmly, "What matters this misfortune? They may indeed kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul." The last words of the voice that had awoken Switzerland.

It is over. The lion-banner of Zurich, torn from the dead hand of the aged banneret by one, like him, to perish in its defence, has indeed been rescued. But it has headed the flight and the fall of Zurich.

Night on the battle-field. The stars shine out brightly and steadily in the clear un pitying heavens, and the glistening hoarfrost falls thick upon the shroudless dead. There, on that fatal field, lie the pride and flower of Zurich—the pastor amidst his flock, the father amidst his sons, the hoary-headed councillor and the sunny-haired youth. Around the victorious standards of the Waldstettes the soldiers have lit their watch-fires, and the heart of many a dying Christian is wrung as their words of triumphant boasting fall upon his ears. "Where is now your gospel?" they ask, as, torch in hand, they wander over the death-strewn field. Grown hard in the fierce Italian wars, their hearts are steeled against mercy, against all human feeling. The wounded and the dying lie thickly round, and ever and anon, as the red glare of the torches falls upon a pale, death-blanching countenance, dark, savage faces surround it, and fierce, bitter, mocking words are heard. "Heretic! dog! villain! confess, call upon the saints and the blessed Mother of God," they cry. And, when the Name above every name alone

trembles on the pallid lips, and the parting spirit, faithful in death and unto death, clings to the one mighty, tender, pierced Hand in which alone is the gift of salvation, the crown of life is won. From the gloom and horror of that red death-strewn plain many a soul goes up to receive a martyr's fadeless crown, won, not in the rush and heat of battle, but amidst cruel mockings, and base inhuman blows and fiendish tortures.

And what of him who lay bleeding, dying, amidst the fearful ruin of all that his noble misguided heart held dear? What thoughts passed through that mighty mind, what anguish wrung that generous spirit, what feelings filled that fervent, devoted soul, as he beheld the labours of eleven years thus scattered to the winds, the lamp that had been lighted in Switzerland quenched in blood, the homes of Zurich filled with widows and orphans, and the yoke of the foreigner about to be laid once more on his country's neck?

There he lay, with hands clasped upon his bleeding breast, and eyes upraised to heaven, beneath a pear-tree close to the road along which fugitives and pursuers had been passing hour by hour, and near a group of soldiers gathered round a watch-fire. Did he recall his own sadly prophetic words, written after rising from the plague-stricken bed—

“ The uncertain hour,
Come when it may,
Perhaps may bring
Still worse dismay ”?

And in that “worse dismay” did he recognize the chastening stroke of a Father's loving hand, and rejoice to bear his yoke “straight to the skies”? Who can doubt it? As the death-shadows gather, the light of heaven breaks. And in that light all earthly confidences and errors fade and flee like night-mists before the sunrise. Ah! could that silenced voice once more have rung through the hills and vales of Switzerland, would not the key-note of that thrilling peal have been as ever, yet then with deeper, wider, fuller meaning, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

At last that long anguish ends. Two soldiers, bent on plunder, approach. Seeing life yet lingers, they exhort him to confess his errors, and call upon the Virgin and the saints. The leaden hand of death is upon the mute lips, but the wounded head moves feebly in dissent, the eyes turn heavenward. Again and again they urge him,—still that faint gesture of dissent, still that calm, steadfast, upward look. Enraged and curious, one of the soldiers raises the heavy head, and with an oath turns it towards the watch-fire. The red gleam falls upon the rugged, striking features, and the dark piercing eyes which still retain much of their wonted fire.

“It is Zwingle!” he cries, letting the dying head of the Lord’s servant fall rudely to the ground.

The words meet the ear of Captain Fockinger of Unterwalden, who stands near, a veteran in the mercenary warfare against which Zwingle had so earnestly contended. Starting forward with the words, “Die, obstinate heretic!” he raises his sword and strikes him violently on the throat.

“Straight to the skies” the freed spirit wings its way. All of earth is over for Ulric Zwingle.

Night in Zurich. Night, and lamentation, and mourning, and woe! A voice indeed of lamentation and bitter weeping,—Zurich weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not.

Morning on the battle-field. Day amidst the darkness of death. The blood of slaughtered brethren crying to heaven for vengeance on the heads of those whose fratricidal swords have shed it. The soldiers, satiated with vengeance, have retired to gloat and quarrel over their prey. But pale men, with rigid features and close-set lips, wander here and there in silent mournful groups. In the stripped and mutilated corpses round they recognize, too late, countrymen, friends, brothers. Groans and tears break forth as some familiar face is recognized,

as some cold hand once grasped in friendship, or extended to aid and bless, is seen stiffened in death.

One such group stands gazing, where, with the early sunbeams shining like a glory on his bright hair, and a proud smile lingering yet on his curved lip, lies Gerold von Knonau. The solemn beauty of that young face seems to have touched other hearts besides those of the gray-haired men, who through tears, are gazing on it now. Untouched, unpillaged, he lies there as he fell. At last one speaks. "That boy was a husband and a father," he says. "I knew him well. When I saw him last he stood with his young wife's hand in his by the cradle of their child. Now he lies here, and *thus*. And that home is desolate, and Switzerland has lost a life full of the fairest, richest promise. Oh, that the sun of yesterday could rise once more!" Vain, bootless wish!

They pass on. None of them recognize the form of Max Reinhardt, as it lies on the blood-stained earth where Zwingle received his first wound. And yet to some his was a familiar face. Oh! may some kind hand cast earth's last covering over it ere the unerring eye of love shall meet it. There was no sanctity in death to those who, looking upon it by the torch's lurid glare, recognized in it one of the foremost of the enemies of the old faith, one whose voice had called loudest for the unsheathing of the sword, and dealt brutal vengeance on the lifeless clay!

A few yards distant a crowd is collected; the low, hoarse murmur of many voices is heard. There lies Switzerland's noblest son, Ulric Zwingle. The pale features, in their last repose, still bear the imprint of the ardent spirit that animated them in life, the dark eyes gaze calmly upward still.

The gray-haired man who had wept over Gerold's untimely fate presses forward and gazes long and steadfastly at the face of the holy and noble dead. "God rest thy soul!" he cries. "Ulric Zwingle, whatever may have been thy creed, thou wert

a true and loyal confederate ;" and, burying his face in his hands, he weeps—and not alone.

But some of those whose creed and whose politics Zwingle had attacked in life, unabashed and unsoftened by the presence of death, demand further vengeance. In vain a few noble men raise their voices, crying, "Peace to the dead, and God alone be their judge." The horrors of the field of Cappel have not yet received their crowning stroke.

"Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do," are the words of the Master that cheered the dying servant. Ah, fierce and bloody men ! the earthen vessel that once contained the heavenly treasure is shattered, the immortal spirit has soared free and rejoicing into the presence of its Lord. Ye can do no more. Ye may, indeed, dismember the body of Ulric Zwingle as a traitor and heretic, ye may burn those dismembered parts to ashes, and fling them to the winds of heaven ; but ye cannot mar the peace of the blessed departed spirit, nor scatter that hallowed dust where that the Lord who owns it will not find it at his coming.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DARKNESS AND DESOLATION.

"Many an eye
May wail the dimming of our shining star."

SHAKESPEARE.



WORDS are powerless to convey the faintest realization of the anguish, the terror, the dismay that had spread like an electric shock through the crowded streets and into every home and heart of Zurich on that terrible night when the wounded and panic-stricken fugitives from Cappel rushed into the city with the tidings of that fatal field.

Zwingle dead ! The cause of the gospel lost ! Beneath this blow from the Hand they had thought stretched out to defend them, even the spirits of Christians sank into the dust ; while the populace, maddened with rage and terror, threatened to fill the stricken city itself with bloodshed, and menaced with death the councillors and ministers of the word whom that awful carnage had spared. The tocsin was wrung, and all the remaining citizens were ordered to march towards Cappel. Too late ! The roads were lined with bleeding fugitives, each bearing his own tale of individual bereavement and sorrow, all alike witnessing of utter desolation and ruin.

To the old house in the High Street one such made his way through the wailing, weeping crowds of bereaved, heart-stricken beings that thronged the road leading to Cappel and the streets

of the city. The light fell upon his ashen face and blood-stained garments, and Rosa had rushed forward in time to receive the fainting form of her husband into her arms. He bore the tidings of Max's death, learned from one who saw him fall ; and of that death which had bereaved all Zurich.

And to that once happy home—in which, through the long, fated hours of that dreadful day, a pale young mother had sat with her babe pressed closely against her scarce beating heart, and her meek, tearless eyes, eloquent with the anguished pleadings her cold lips could not utter, raised in one mute imploring prayer, while the tender, holy words, breathed by the loving voice of the crippled brother, whose presence alone she could brook, fell on her ear like far-off distant music, calming, soothing, even while uncomprehended by, the over-burdened heart, in which one thought, one prayer alone found place—a messenger came. And the word he spoke was—Death !

To that happy, holy Christian home, whence the light of love and truth had shone out throughout all Switzerland, came not one messenger, but many. First the wailing cry borne from lip to lip, that told of Zurich's mighty loss and of her own desolation and widowhood, reached the true-hearted woman, whose faith had failed not through that terrible day. With her young weeping children round her she knelt, and with a spirit worthy of the one God had taken to himself amidst clouds and thick darkness, bowed her head to the blow. Then came tidings that her first-born, her noble-gifted Gerold, the son of the husband of her youth, was among the dead ; that her young daughter and beloved sister were widowed, and that her brother had also fallen. Even then the list was not filled ; honoured familiar names, dear to the lips and the heart that lay cold and still on the blood-stained field, were spoken in her ears as those of the slain of Cappel.

Such was the bitter cup, filled to the brim and overflowing, drained by the pale heroic lips of the dead reformer's noble and worthy wife !

But through and amidst and above the wailings of individual sorrow and household bereavement rose an exceeding bitter cry—"Zwingle is dead! the cause of the gospel is lost! God has forsaken us!"

And next day the stricken city learned, with burning grief and indignation, that the rage of the enemies of the truth had denied even a grave to the noble dead. The flames had consumed the dismembered body of Ulric Zwingle, and his dishonoured dust had been scattered to the winds; but as the sword of the executioner and the fire of the fagot-pile were impotent against the ransomed, glorified spirit, so were the malice and hatred of his foes powerless to rob his memory of the tender reverence and grief that gathered round it. The tears and the groans and the wailings of the people of Zurich were the requiem of Ulric Zwingle.

Even then the cup of humiliation and anguish was only half drained by the stricken Reformed Church of Switzerland. Ere long eight hundred men of the allied evangelical cantons lay dead on another disastrous field on the Goubel. Two thousand Genoese soldiers, in the pay of the Pope, had joined the army of the Waldstettes at Zug. The news of the defeat of the heretical Swiss had spread like lightning through the territories of the Emperor and the Pope; in it they saw with triumphant joy a presage of the approaching fall of gospel truth in the Churches of Germany. Charles V. threatened to invade Switzerland in person. The evangelical cantons, no longer stimulated and guided by the steadfast faith and dauntless spirit and ardent patriotism of Zwingle, wavered and cowered before the storm that was ready to burst upon them. The hand of God seemed turned against them; the winter was setting in, and bitter storms of wind and rain forced the soldiers to seek shelter in their homes. One after another the districts most exposed to the invaders made peace and withdrew.

Then a fearful danger threatened Zurich. The army of the

Waldstettes, with the mercenary bands of the pitiless Italian general D'Isola, appeared on the shores of the lake, menacing the city with assault or siege. The terrified peasants fled into it with their wives and children, desperately demanding that peace should be made.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE LIGHT BEYOND THE CLOUD.

"God liveth ever!

Wherefore, soul, despair thou never!"

Lyra Germanica.



IT was done. The treaty had been signed; the deputies had given the right hand of brotherhood to the leaders of the confederates in a meadow on the banks of the Sihl, and were returning sad and sick at heart. Slowly, with drooping heads, and stern, sad faces, they rode through the anxious groups that lined the streets to the town-house, where the council awaited their return.

Among those deputies, still pale from recent suffering of mind and body, and with his right arm bandaged, was Friedel Reinhardt. As soon as possible he left the council, and turned homeward. It was late, and the children had already been sent to rest. In saddened silence he received his wife's embrace, then, without speaking to Paul or Bertha, sat down at the table, and hiding his face in his hands, groaned aloud.

Paul laid his hand on his shoulder. "Be comforted, brother," he said; "if our honour be lost, our faith is left us; and to faith the unsearchable riches of Christ are unsealed."

"Our faith!" Friedel answered slowly; "yes, we have indeed rescued that from the wreck of our hopes, but with the seal of silence on our lips, the fetter on our feet and our hands.

We may not seek to spread it among those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death ; we must sit by and see our brethren perish. In vain has the blood of our noblest and dearest been spilt. O Zwingle, Zwingle ! it is well thou wert taken from the evil to come. Thy great heart would have been broken to have seen all the labours of thy life swept away, made void, made as though they had not been ! ”

“ ‘Lo ! *I* am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’ ‘*I* will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ God lives, God reigns, Friedel,” said Paul ; “ it is better to trust in him than to put *any* confidence in princes or men.”

“ The staff of carnal confidence has indeed proved a broken reed, and pierced the hand that leaned on it,” said Friedel sadly. “ We have preserved the right of preaching the Word of God among ourselves, it is true, but we are bound not to seek to spread it among our brother confederates. The common bailiwicks, and many of the districts in which the gospel had taken firm root, are resigned to the enemies of truth ; and the thrilling voice and steadfast heart that alone could have revived the faith and courage of our stricken Church are stilled and silenced for ever. We have sinned, and God has forsaken us.”

“ Not so, not so, brother,” Paul answered ; “ he chastens, but forsakes not, changes not. In weakness his strength is perfected. Where thou seest only the gloom and the darkness that envelop us, I see the light beyond. This cloud will pass, like the one which inwrapped the shrinking disciples on the mount of transfiguration, and passing will leave no glorified mortals, no human tabernacles in sight—‘no man, but Jesus only.’ From this blood-stained page in her history the Church, not of Zurich nor of Switzerland only, but in all lands, may learn through ages yet to come the sweetly-solemn lesson that God will be *all* to his people—*ALL* their strength, their wisdom, their defence. Shorn of the panoply of faith, burdened with the unproved armour of fleshly wisdom and strength, the Christian

becomes weak, and as other men; and what is true of the individual Christian is true of the Church of Christ. Ah! could the silenced lips of Ulric Zwingli send forth their burning eloquence in our midst once more, this would be their burden. In the terrible chastisement that has come upon us, upon our Church, upon our homes, upon our hearts, he would bid us see the loving correction of a Father's hand. God lives, God reigns, Friedel; Christ lives, and Christ reigns—lives and reigns for us. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Plants of his planting shall never be rooted up. The pure ore cannot be separated from the dross save by the searching heat of the furnace fire."

"Thou art right, Paul," said Friedel, looking up and grasping his brother's hand. "On her own ground we have met Rome and have failed. But her weapons have no power against the armour of God; no, not even her prisons and her stakes. But from those *we* at least are safe," he said as he met his wife's startled eyes; those words had a terrible meaning and reality to her. "But our poor brethren among the Waldstettes and in the districts we have abandoned to their cruel foes! O Paul, my heart is wrung when I think of them! What may not await them?"

"Nothing in which they may not be more than conquerors through Him who loved them; nothing which shall separate them or us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," said Paul. "O Friedel! fear not; God is faithful; his Word and his Spirit will conquer yet!"

The wailing cry of a babe broke in upon their conversation; but it was Bertha who rose and went to the cradle whence it came, while Rosa busied herself with cares for her wearied husband's comfort.

Ah! it was a motherless babe which Bertha rocked so tenderly upon her breast, upon whose fair smiling face Paul gazed through gathering tears. Clare, gentle, loving Clare, lay by her young husband's side in the cathedral cemetery of

Zurich. Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death they were not long divided. From the terrible moment of that fatal night, when, in the solemn, unutterable pity in Paul's eyes, she read the fearful tidings his blanched lips vainly strove to utter, she faded swiftly, inevitably, like a rose severed from its parent stem. No murmurs or repining passed her gentle lips; tears rarely dimmed the far-away gaze of her sweet eyes. Calmly, peacefully, painlessly she faded and died, after one brief month of widowhood. The anguish of her bereavement seemed almost from the first lost in the prospect that each day grew nearer and brighter of a speedy and eternal reunion. "We had but one life between us," she said when they sought to rouse her drooping energies and bade her live for her child's sake. "I cannot remember the time when mine was not bound up with his. For his babe's sake I would live if I could, but I *cannot*."

She was right. The sudden shock of utter bereavement had been too much for the fragile, sensitive frame, and soon those whose darling she had been through the short years of her gentle life ceased to hope what it seemed almost cruel to wish,—that she would be spared to the lonely, desolated life that lay before her.

Her one earthly wish was granted. Madeline came and shared with Bertha the last days of watching, and to her, the night before she died, she said, "Dost thou remember, Madeline, that day at Einsiedeln, so long ago, when I gave my cherished blue necklace to the child-Christ by the Madonna's shrine? Poor, broken, worthless toy, doubtless, tossed aside and forgotten by all but the giver and Him who accepted it, or rather the love of the little child's heart that went with it. That day the first gleam of his love shone in upon my soul. Ever since I have been learning, year by year and day by day, how vast, how unfathomable that love is. A deep, sweet sense of it was with me, long before I understood it. And now I am going to dwell in its full sunshine for ever and for ever, with my

Gerold, and the mother, and all he has gathered into his rest, his home."

She paused a while, with a lovely smile on her pale, sweet face, and then continued: "I will tell thee, Madeline, now, how I have longed all my life through to give the Lord Jesus something in return for his love; but it has seemed as though his part was all giving, mine all receiving. He filled my life with blessings,—he gave me my Gerold; and all I had to give him in return was my poor, powerless love, which seemed like my worthless beads by the gold and jewels on that glittering shrine, in comparison with what others did and bore for him. A childish fancy, Madeline; but thou knowest I was ever only thy little Clare, thy child-sister. But that dreadful day and night, when I sat still and waited for the tidings that were so slow to come, it seemed to me as if he asked, 'Wilt thou give me thy best, thy dearest—thy brave, loving, beautiful Gerold?' I sought to close my ears to the voice, but I could not; and at last I said, 'Lord, thou art worthy of the best, and yet I cannot give it thee; *but take it if thou wilt.*' And he did take it.

"But oh, Madeline, if his love has been shown to me in life, how much more in my death! Ah! he was not of those who bade me stay down here. No; with the tidings of my Gerold's death came his summons to my heart, 'My child, come thou home too.' Many told me I must live for my babe; but he knew better. Once I wished I could take him with me, but now I can trust him to his tender, comprehensive love, and to you."

Her gentle spirit passed away on the breast of that best-loved sister, but it was into Bertha's arms she gave her child. "Thou hast thy Raymond, Madeline," she said, "and thine own little ones, and Friedel has Rosa and his; so I give my boy to thy charge, Bertha, for a mother's care; and to thine, Paul, for a father's love and teaching." Thus the last act of "little Clare"—the fond title under which her memory was enshrined to the end in the hearts of those who loved her—was one of thought-

ful, comprehensive, ministering love, the quality that above all others had distinguished her in her gentle, lovely life.

And so it was that the orphan babe was brought home to the old house in the High Street, and that a fountain—ever fresh and flowing—of protective, possessive, human love was opened in the lives that would otherwise have been so lonely, and a link formed between the hearts of Paul and Bertha, and the anxieties, and joys, and affections of other homes, which could otherwise scarcely have existed.

Friedel's mournful forebodings were sadly realized. Scarcely was the treaty signed, when Rome began her work of restoration. Monks, filled with zeal and triumph, overran the country. The convents were refilled, the mass was re-established, the Word of God was banished from the pulpits, images were restored, altars and shrines glittered with the gifts of the faithful. The mountain-road leading to Einsiedeln was again thronged with pilgrims, and the walls from which the Word of Life had resounded throughout Switzerland from the eloquent and faithful lips whose dust the wind had scattered, became once more, as they continue to this day, the stronghold and gathering-place of superstition.

Nor was this all. With the sword the followers of the evangelical doctrine had sought to defend their cause, and with the sword were they compelled to abandon it—to fly, or to perish. Fines, banishment, imprisonment, in some cases torture and death, were, as ever, Rome's tender mercies to the vanquished and the erring.

And upon all this Zurich had to look, powerless, helpless, in bitter, indignant sorrow. Bound by the treaty to non-intervention, she could not stretch out a helping hand to her suffering brethren. Her own trials were not small. Her best and bravest had fallen on the red fields of Cappel and the Goubel—not of her warriors only, but of her ministers, twenty-five of whom had been left dead at Cappel alone ; her homes were full

of mourning and desolation, her councils of weakness and dissension. She had walked by sight, and not by faith, and the path she had chosen had led to unparalleled disaster and catastrophe. "The sea and the waves roared, and men's hearts failed them for fear." But a voice came through the storm, and it said, "It is I ; be not afraid." "In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." And Zurich heard it.

Ere long another blow fell on the stricken Church of Switzerland, another bright and shining light was quenched. The meek and holy *Æcolampadius*, whom the Zurichers had besought to fill *Zwingle's* vacant place, was called home to his rest and his reward. He died in full, unruffled peace, with wife and children and friends around him,—a fitting close of a life so calm and holy. Both lights were gone from their earthly sphere, but how striking and instructive the difference in their setting ! *Zwingle's* had gone down like the sun at noon, amidst the gloom and crash and roar of an awful tempest ; *Æcolampadius's* like the summer sun into the scarce-heaving ocean, at the evening's close of a long and glorious day. But "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," however, wherever, whenever it may be.

God had not forsaken Zurich or Switzerland. In *Zwingle's* place he gave to Zurich young Henry Bullinger, the pupil and friend, and afterwards biographer, of the great reformer. He was a son of that Dean of Bremgarten who had withstood Samson, the indulgence-monger, and had been a zealous friend of the reformation. Banished by the *Waldstettes* from his pilaged home and native city, and menaced with death, Henry came to Zurich with his aged father, and was at once welcomed to the post he filled with faithfulness and wisdom for forty years.

And for Switzerland God raised up numerous and faithful teachers. Farel continued his apostolic labours ; and another French refugee, ere many years had passed, kindled a light on

the shore of her fairest lake, which was fed from the same source as those that had been quenched. In 1541, John Calvin of Noyau, in Picardy, finally settled at Geneva.

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And now for a farewell glance at the characters of our story. Raymond and Madeline von Ohrendorf were known through the troubled times that followed in after-years in France and Germany as the friends and protectors of all whom war or persecution in either country had rendered homeless and friendless. Recognizing in their possession of rank and wealth and influence and happiness a stewardship they held under their Father and their God, their one great aim was to be loving and faithful and wise stewards of his bounty. And his blessing rested on their hearth and their hearts throughout the sunshine and shadows of life.

The Lady Ermengarde lived to a green old age, surrounded by her children's children.

The death of the profligate and persecuting queen-mother of France, Louise of Savoy, in the September after his marriage, opened the way for the return of Guy de Montmédi to the castle of his fathers. And the dream of the lonely prisoner of the Sorbonne of the home that might have been, was realized by the home that was.

And those were times when it was needful that the light of love and purity should shine brightly round the home hearth in France. It was to no Arcadia Muriel had returned, no unbroken scene of summer sunshine. Clouds often gathered darkly around them, persecutions and dangers continually menaced those who adhered to the faith of the gospel. But, through all, Guy and Muriel de Montmédi were preserved by the God in whom they trusted. And in the discipline of life, in anxious watchings for the husband whom perils ever surrounded, in tears shed over tiny coffins, in the sharing of the burdens and the griefs and the cares of others, Muriel learned the lessons the cold isolation and monotony of the strictest

religious rule could never have taught. In laying down her self-made cross, and surrendering the care of her life and her soul to God, she had secured no free and thornless path. Ever and anon a well-known voice said, "Take up thy cross and follow me." And she obeyed, only to find its weight borne by the pierced hand that laid it on her. In the precious, tender love of her husband, in the clinging of children's loving arms, she found no leaden weight dragging her down to earth, but channels through which the sanctified affections of her heart might flow back to the Giver of all good gifts, the Fountain of all true love. And in the heroic and martyr annals of the Huguenots of France, the names of many of the descendants of Guy and Muriel de Montmédi shine with undying lustre.

A numerous family, reviving old familiar names, sprang up round Friedel and Rosa Reinhardt in the old home. But Paul and Bertha did not long continue part of the household. Amidst the poor and suffering, in the district that was Paul's charge, their lowly home was found. Young Gerold grew up beneath their roof, a noble, manly boy, with his father's brow and eyes and his gentle mother's smile, repaying the tenderness and care that had made the blank of an orphaned life unknown to him with all the warm affection of a spirit ardent as his father's and loving as his mother's, and shedding the bright halo of joy and hope round those lonely lives.

Madeline had pleaded hard with Paul to leave his arduous duties in the city, and become the chaplain of the castle. But in vain. In the corner of the vineyard, a lowly, unnoticed one it might be, in which the Master had placed him, he toiled on till the end—till the broad dark river was crossed once more, and the golden shore and the pearly gates and the fadeless groves broke on his sight—till, no more from an empty bark, but with a precious cargo of souls rescued from perishing, he sprang to the Master's feet, and met the welcome from the Master's eye and voice.

We may look in vain for the name of Paul Reinhardt amongst the earthly records of the Church's worthies ; but there is one book in which it, and those of hundreds such, will be preserved through all eternity. But for long years after that name ceased to be spoken as a household word, it was treasured in the hearts and memories of the people of Zurich.

And Bertha. Were her busy energies stunted and confined in the narrow sphere of the pastor's lowly home? No. For of her it may be said, as of the beloved Persis, "She laboured much in the Lord," in the lowly work of ministering love, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ministering to the sick. To her came not the opened lips of eloquent pleading for Christ ; her offering was the fruit of busy hands and willing feet, prompted by a loving, divinely-opened heart. And in this service, and in her care for Paul and Gerold, she found happiness enough even here.

Three hundred years have passed since these things were. God has preserved his gospel in Switzerland in those cantons and districts which were won to it by his Word and his Spirit. In those in which the Church, forgetful of the only true armour and weapons of her high and holy and spiritual calling, sought to enforce it by the wisdom and powers of this world and the carnal sword, Popery is reigning still.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

"My kingdom is not of this world," saith Christ.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God," saith the Spirit.



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